



**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES  
BRONX AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT'S (BAAHP)  
AFRICAN IMMIGRATION RESEARCH  
REPORT BY DR JANE KANI EDWARD  
FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK**

**FORWARD**

The White Paper on African Immigration to the Bronx that you are about to read, written by Dr Jane Kani Edward, Ph.D., is the product of a remarkable journey of discovery by the research team of Fordham University's Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP). When the BAAHP began in the Spring 2003, neither the scholars nor archivists who launched it were aware that the Bronx was the site of the largest concentration of African immigrants in New York City and possibly in the entire Western Hemisphere. Our goal was to gather oral histories to tell the as yet unwritten story of the hundreds of thousands of African- Americans and West Indians who moved to the Bronx from the 1940's to the 1960's and to collect written documents that would reinforce the narratives we were recording. But in conducting that research, which took us to neighborhood schools, churches and cultural organizations, we noticed a growing West African presence in the communities we were visiting. African restaurants, groceries, and convenience stores were opening almost daily in neighborhood business districts, women wearing hijab (Islamic scarves) and men wearing traditional African garments were increasingly visible on Bronx streets; children from a wide variety of African nations were a significant portion of the student population in almost every school we visited. When we discussed this growing African presence with our community partners, particularly leaders of The Bronx Museum of the Arts and the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation both of which are located in neighborhoods adjoining the Grand Concourse, and with the Principal of Public School 140, located in Morrisania, they told us that African immigrants were the fastest growing component of the communities they served. They urged us to expand our oral history project to include that population.

Our experience recruiting student workers at Fordham also encouraged us to make African immigration to the Bronx an important subject of inquiry. As the BAAHP grew large enough to recruit Fordham undergraduates as archivists, transcribers, videographers, and film editors, we noticed that a growing percentage of the students who volunteered were children of African immigrant families living in the Bronx, whose families' countries of origin ranged from Nigeria and Ghana, to Mali and Sierra Leone. That Fordham is a highly selective private college and the presence of these students made that fact all the more significant. Clearly, African families were making their mark on the local educational system by sending highly motivated children to the Bronx public schools. Their success there was rewarded by admission to some of the top colleges in the Northeast.

When we put everything together, we noticed that something extraordinary was happening in the Bronx. And virtually no one was discussing this in academia or print and broadcast media. African immigrants were revitalizing once decayed Bronx neighborhoods by opening business, churches and mosques, buying homes, and using local public schools as vehicles of individual and collective mobility. This was a story that needed telling and that we, in the BAAHP were uniquely equipped to tell.

In summer 2006, we took a first step towards initiating this research by hiring, on a part time basis, Dr. Jane Edward, a Sudanese scholar who had just published a book on Sudanese women in exile, to conduct oral histories with Bronx African immigrants. Since Dr. Edward had just moved to New York and had few contacts in the Bronx, we started our interviews with African immigrant students at Fordham and their families, and African immigrants who were working at the University. We learned that this group composed a large portion of the security force on Fordham's Bronx campus. After the interviews, we had a better sense of their countries of origin, their time of arrival, and the neighborhoods they settled in. The next step was to start reaching out to community organizations to get them involved in recruiting participants for our oral history research.

Not long after Dr. Edward began the interviews, an event took place which focused the attention of the entire city of New York on African immigrant communities in the Bronx. In early March 2007, a fire swept through a three-story frame house in the Highbridge Section of the Bronx, killing 10 Malian immigrants, most of which were children. As the city officials, and ordinary citizens grappled with this terrible tragedy, hundreds of African Muslims gathered outside a mosque on Sheridan Avenue where a memorial for the victims were held, making most residents of the city aware, for the first time, that there was a large African Muslim community that had settled in the Bronx. In subsequent days, as reporters swarmed through Bronx neighborhoods to gain background information on the people most affected by this tragedy, some key features of the Bronx's Muslim African immigrant population were revealed. First, that this population largely came from Francophone nations in West Africa-- Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and Togo. Second, that while many male members of this community spoke French, many of the women in the community only spoke languages like Malinke, Bambara, Soninke and Wolof, languages that almost no one who worked for schools and health care providers understood. And third, that this community was enrolling large numbers of children in the public schools. They were in desperate need of government services, but were afraid to access them because of language and immigration issues.

In the aftermath of the Malian tragedy, the BAAHP decided to seek major funding for its African immigration research. We realized that the subject was one that had important policy implications for those working in education, health care and community economic development as well as for scholars doing research or documenting urban social history.

Our first objective was to secure a coordinator for this research. At our request, Fordham created a full time position for Dr. Edward. Following that, we applied for a grant to the Carnegie Corporation of New York to expand our African immigration studies. Funds were received in

summer 2008 and the next step we took was to identify African businesses and organizations in the Bronx by walking and driving through the streets of Morrisania, Highbridge, Tremont, Morris Heights, and South Fordham-- the major Bronx districts where the African immigrant population had settled. When this was done, we recruited a research team who had contacts in key Bronx African immigrant communities and could win the confidence of local residents

The second objective was more difficult and complicated than the first. Dr. Edward and I had to convince scholars with contacts in the community, as well as community representatives themselves, that our oral histories would not compromise the immigration status of participants. And that in fact, allowing representatives of the community to talk about their experiences would win respect for African immigrants and enhance their ability to obtain needed services and resources. It helped that the BAAHP already had five years of experience conducting oral histories and had an excellent reputation among educators, elected officials and leaders of cbo's. That said, certain changes in our research protocol had to be made to address the concerns of African immigrant communities. Not only did we have to allow participants to record their oral histories without revealing their actual names, we also had to acquire the capacity to conduct interviews conducted in French as well as English.

To facilitate recruitment of new members of our research team as well as participants in oral history interviews. Dr. Edward developed an excellent brochure describing the objectives of our African immigration research. This was accompanied by a new release form that allowed participants to use pseudonyms. Armed with these, we literally "hit the streets" to win support for what we were doing from key individuals and community organizations.

The big breakthrough for us came in September 2008 when we set up a table outside the Bronx Museum of the Arts, on 165<sup>th</sup> Street and Grand Concourse, as part of a street fair the Museum was sponsoring. This table was at the epicenter of African settlement and sociability in the Bronx, with many African groceries, restaurants, video stores and religious institutions located nearby, and during the seven hours we sat there, many people came by to talk and look through our brochure. As a result of these interactions, we recruited two new members of our research team: Dr. Benjamin Hayford, a professor of education from Ghana, who seemed to know every leading educator, business leader, minister and imam in the Bronx's huge and expanding Ghanaian community; and Karima Zerrou, a French speaking music promoter, festival organizer and media personality who seemed to know everyone involved in music performance and promotion in New York's Francophone African community. Hayford gave our research team unprecedented access to important leaders of the Ghanaian community, making it much easier to recruit interview participants; Zerrou gave us the capacity to conduct interviews in French as well as English and to recruit interview participants involved in music and media. When they joined us, we now had a research team, and a group of skilled interviewers, that was strong enough and diverse enough to begin winning the confidence of key leaders of the communities we were studying.

Over the next year our African immigration research team won the confidence of people in Bronx African communities to a degree neither Dr. Edward nor I could have anticipated when we began this project a year and a half earlier. As soon as they joined our interview staff, Dr. Benjamin

Hayford and Karima Zerrou began scheduling interviews from within their networks at the rate of almost one interview per week. But as important as the number and power of the stories these interviews recorded, was their location. Unlike most BAAHP interviews, which took place in our Departmental seminar room at Fordham, the vast majority of interviews Hayford and Zerrou scheduled took place in Bronx neighborhoods-- in churches, Islamic centers, schools, places of business, people's apartments, and at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. One consequence of this neighborhood centered approach, coupled with the sensitivity of our interviewers to people's language, religion and immigration status, is that word began to spread that our researchers could be trusted, not only to help Bronx African immigrants tell their stories, but to serve as advocates for the communities they lived in. Soon we were getting calls from community organizations serving Bronx African communities asking for our help in communicating with elected officials, accessing health care, dealing with immigration issues, and helping get better education resources for their young people.

One breakthrough occurred in the Bronx Ghanaian community, where Benjamin Hayford's contacts opened numerous doors, but we also developed good relations with the African Muslim community in the Bronx, who soon began to look to the BAAHP as a valuable ally and advocate. This was in large part due to Dr. Edward's skills in communicating with leaders of mosques and Islamic centers, which she learned growing up in Sudan, but it was also a tribute to the vision of two remarkable individuals who embraced our research and saw its relevance to their own work-- Omar Jawo, a former political leader in Gambia who was the first social worker hired by the New York public schools to work with African immigrant children and families and Sheikh Moussa Drammeh, an Imam, business leader and community organizer who headed the Islamic Leadership School in the Parkchester section of the Bronx. Both of these individuals saw the research team of BAAHP as an ally in defusing stereotypes about Islam, making schools and health care agencies "culturally sensitive" to Islamic religious practices, and enhancing opportunities to build interfaith coalitions to fight for needed resources in Bronx communities. Omar Jawo invited us to participate in his campaign to make Bronx schools more hospitable to African children and families, and Sheikh Drammeh invited Dr. Edward to join the board of a new African charter school he was trying to organize. We in turn, invited Mr. Jawo and Sheikh Drammeh to serve as featured speakers for an African Immigration lecture series we had proposed and gotten funded by the New York Council for the Humanities.

In summer 2009, these outreach efforts led to a visit to our offices by a delegation from the Futa Islamic Center, the largest mosque in the Bronx, whose building in Morrisania had been seized, in the midst of negotiations with the City, for alleged nonpayment of taxes. Having heard about our work from Sheikh Drammeh, they asked us to write letters to the Court of Appeals, which was hearing their case. They explained the important role that African immigrants were playing in rebuilding once decayed Bronx neighborhoods and asked our help in assuring that the building they bought with hundreds of small contributions be returned to the Futa Islamic Center. After hearing their story, Dr. Edward and I wrote a long letter to the Court, which we circulated widely, extolling the contributions of hardworking African immigrants to the revival of the Bronx and

highlighting the role of the Futa Islamic Center as a focal point of neighborhood stability.<sup>1</sup> Several months later, when the Appeals Court ruled in the Futa Islamic Center's favor, Dr. Edward and I were invited to participate in a ceremony at the mosque in which Dr. Edward was given the special honor of sitting at the front of the podium in a section normally reserved for men. Since that time, we have worked closely with many other representatives of the African Islamic community including Djounedau Titikpina, head of a new organization called the African People's Alliance, who has solicited our help in organizing a health fair at Fordham for African immigrants, trying to secure grants, and persuading the city to approve its proposal for an "Africa Day Parade" in the Bronx.

While this breakthrough was occurring with representatives of the African Islamic communities most of whom were born in Francophone countries like Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, and Togo, we were experiencing an equal breakthrough with representatives of the largely Christian Bronx Ghanaian community. In the fall of 2009, the BAAHP's research team was approached by Kojo Ampah; a Ghanaian student enrolled in Fordham College of Liberal Studies, to secure our help in winning representation for the first African student organization at Fordham, the African Cultural Exchange. As we began working with Mr. Ampah, who had been a major radio personality and festival organizer in Ghana, we immediately recognized the value he might have as an interview coordinator, and made him an official member of our research team. Since that time, he has been responsible for putting Fordham on the map as a place where influential Ghanaians come to tell their stories, among them the Asantahene (the Ashanti king of New York), several powerful Ghanaian ministers, and the most popular hip life artist in Ghana, Kontihene, who maintains his year round residence in the Bronx. He also organized the first African Cultural Festival at Fordham, co-sponsored by BAAHP, and helped us organize a summer course at Fordham on the Ghanaian language Twi, the first such course ever held at a University in New York City. Because of the publicity granted to the Twi course, which was covered by news services in Ghana as well as in Ghanaian American publications, a steady stream of Ghanaians in academia, business and the arts has approached our research team for help in publicizing their activities or telling their stories. Having once had trouble finding people in the Bronx's African communities willing to participate in oral history interviews, we now have trouble finding time to interview all the people who are asking to participate.

In summation, we in the BAAHP were lucky enough to make connections with a large, dynamic, diverse African immigration population in the Bronx that has a remarkable story to tell. Thanks to the Carnegie Corporation of New York we were given the resources to record those stories and share them with the world. The White Paper that follows is the first published product of our efforts, but it will not be the last. For years to come, our research team, as individuals and as a group, will be presenting what we have learned about this remarkable population in conference papers, books, articles, documentary films, school curricula, and policy recommendations for government agencies and elected officials. We hope this White Paper will open the eyes of those

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<sup>1</sup> See attached Letter to Appellate Court in Support of Futa Islamic Center's Claim to 3400 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

who read it to an immigrant population which is reshaping the social, cultural, economic and religious landscape of the Bronx and is helping to make New York a more diverse and democratic city.

By analyzing the activities carried out under the Carnegie Corporation Grant—the interviews conducted, the meetings with community organizations held, the visits to schools, religious organizations and cultural organizations developed, we concluded that the project team made a major breakthrough in winning the trust of key individuals in Bronx African immigrant communities and served as strong advocates to secure badly needed services for this vital population. We also accumulated valuable information about that community's characteristics, accomplishments and needs.

In the short time since this project has been initiated, our research team has been able to effectively document and publicize the histories and experiences of the African immigrant population in the Bronx, making scholars, educators, health care providers, social work professionals and elected officials far aware of the contributions and achievements of Africans who live in Bronx communities as well as the special needs of that population.

It is our sincere hope that as our research project moves forward, more people in positions of leadership will recognize the importance of African immigrants to the political, economic, educational, and cultural life of the Bronx and New York City, and that they will develop policy initiatives that will support this vital and dynamic immigrant groups by offering badly need services that will nurture their families and communities. Leaders—of all types—need to make this group feel truly welcome as key contributors to the Bronx's ongoing political and economic growth and development.

*By Dr Mark Naison, Founder and Principal Investigator, Bronx African American History Project*

**BRONX AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY PROJETS (BAAHP)  
AFRICAN IMMIGRATION RESEARCH  
REPORT BY DR. JANE EDWARD**

**INTRODUCTION**

The African Immigration Research project of Fordham University was initially launched in the summer of 2006. The project is part of the larger Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP) which is a partnership of Fordham University's Department of African and African American Studies, the Bronx County Historical Society and local Bronx residents and community organizations. The project is partially funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This final progress report is intended to highlight the project's activities and accomplishments since it received the Carnegie Corporation grant from the period July 2008 to June 2010. The report covers the period from July 1, 2008 to September 30, 2010. The report is divided into three parts. The first part it provides brief background information about the strategies and methods employed in conducting African immigration research. The second part summarizes the results of our research, including the interviews we conducted, recurrent themes emerging from our research, possible immediate and long-term impact of our activities, our future plans or some of the steps undertaken to insure the sustainability of the project, as well as policy implications of our work. The third part of the report outlines consultative meetings the research team held, events attended at public schools, religious and cultural institutions, and lists some of identified African-owned businesses, religious organizations and cultural institutions, and lectures, tours and workshops organized.<sup>2</sup>

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The African Immigration Research project seeks to examine the situation of African immigrants in the Bronx with an aim of capturing their complex and varied experiences. Using Oral History as our primary research method, the project analyzes the social, cultural, economic and historical aspects of African immigrant life in the Bronx. The goal is to provide insights into the immigrants' differentiated experiences, and their social, cultural, economic, political and intellectual institutions and their contributions. The main argument made is that Africans in the Bronx should not be seen solely as dependent on social services available in the county. Rather, they should also be viewed as active contributors to the economic, social, cultural, intellectual, and political life of the Bronx County and to their home communities in Africa. As such, the research attempts to shift the discussion about African immigration from simply assessing the needs and challenges faced by African immigrants, which dominates the literature, to an analysis of their achievements and contributions to the host society. Such analysis adds a new dimension to the growing scholarship on African immigration to the United States by analyzing the social, cultural, economic, political, and intellectual contributions that African immigrants make to their host society including the linkages they build between local communities in America and Africa. Similarly, African immigrants in the Bronx should not be seen as homogenous group, rather they should be conceptualized as diverse and differentiated group based on their national, regional, religious, class, social status, gender, age, ability/disability and other forms of social difference. Given such diversity their lived experiences and choices they make also varies based on similar social differences that characterize them.

The research covers the period from 1985 to the present. It is the period when African immigrants, especially people from West Africa, began moving into Central Bronx. The research

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<sup>2</sup> The information for the final section of report is attached as appendices.

intends to document and analyze the life history of African immigrant families by concentrating on housing, race relations, migratory experiences, music, art, sports, religion, education, health care, gender issues and any other experiences relating to African immigrant life in the Bronx. The choice of the Bronx as a setting for conducting this research is based on the fact that the Bronx contains the highest concentration of African immigrants in New York City. According to the US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey, there are about 36,179 Africans residing in the Bronx, the largest groups of whom were Ghanaians, although people from Francophone Africa are also present in growing numbers.<sup>3</sup> In addition to Ghanaians and Nigerians, Africans from Guinea, Togo, Mali, the Gambia, Senegal, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, and Sierra Leone, among others are found in the Bronx. The high concentration of Africans in the Bronx is also evident in the presence of many African-owned businesses, houses of worship – Mosques, Churches, religious and cultural centers, and other social institutions in the Bronx—as well as the growing presence of African children in Bronx public schools.<sup>4</sup> Another important reason that made the Bronx the perfect setting for this research is due to the conviction and commitment of Fordham University through its Department of African and African-American Studies to reach out to these communities and create linkages and partnership with different community organizations in the Bronx, where the main campus of Fordham University is located.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND QUESTIONS**

The project uses oral history and urban ethnography to document the experiences of the people under study. Oral history can be defined as “the systematic collection of living people’s testimonies about their own experiences.”<sup>5</sup> In addition to oral history interviewing, observation and participant observation are used to collect information. Participant observation is particularly useful in creating linkages and gaining access to and establishing trust with the African immigrant community. Our research team also reviews scholarly writings and public archival records on African immigrants’ experiences, religious pamphlets, community newspapers, magazines and event programs. Demographic evidence is also employed to determine the population under study. Review of scholarly writings on African immigrant population is necessary in the process of data analysis and publication of research findings. The goal is to insure credibility and reliability of research data and findings.

The research employs an epistemology that uses unstructured, open-ended questions to guide the interview process. One of the main advantages of open-ended questions is, it allows the respondent to provide detailed answers to the questions, and it gives the interviewer a chance to ask follow up questions. Interview questions focus on family life, housing, race relations, patterns of migration, settlement patterns, music, sports, religion, political and economic issues, educational experiences, gender issues, organizing and social institutions, and other aspects relevant to the African immigrant community.<sup>6</sup>

## **INTERVIEW PROCESS**

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<sup>3</sup> Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey

<sup>4</sup> See attached directory of African establishments in the Bronx

<sup>5</sup> Judith Moyer, “Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History,” Online article, 1993, Revised 1999, [http://dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own.toolkit/oralhistory-html](http://dohistory.org/on_your_own.toolkit/oralhistory-html), last accessed, December 15, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> See attached “Guide Questions for the Study of African Immigrants in the Bronx”



An interview usually last between one to three hours in length and may take place in more than one session. Generally, interviews are conducted at Fordham University's Rose Hill Campus in the Bronx. However, the interviewer(s) and participant(s) may agree upon a location for off-campus interviews if necessary. The date and time of the interview will also be agreed upon by the interviewer(s) and the participant(s). Interviews are either audio taped, or videotaped or both to facilitate transcription and documentation. Interviews are conducted in English and occasionally in French, as many African immigrants in the Bronx come from Francophone African countries.

## **ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

This section will outline some of the activities carried out by the research team, the accomplishments made so far, as well as some of the recurrent themes that emerged from our interviews.

### **LECTURE SERIES ON "AFRICAN IMMIGRATION TO THE BRONX" (2009/2010)**

The research team organized lecture series on "African immigration to the Bronx" in the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. The goals of the series were twofold: 1) to produce six public events; and explore critical aspects of Bronx history which is scarcely researched or documented; and 2) to provide a forum for exchange of ideas among community activists, community leaders, Bronx community residents, humanities scholars, and college students. Six topics were covered during the series by African scholars residing in the United States. The topics included: African women and Art; African-owned businesses in the Bronx; religion and African immigrant community; African immigrant families in the Bronx: cultural continuity and change; African Musicians and music in the Bronx; and Migration and Remittance: African immigrants' Remittances from United States. Our project provided a forum for exchange, sharing and learning of new ideas among community activists, community leaders, Bronx residents, humanities scholars and college students from Fordham and other institutions of higher learning in the New York City area. The lecture series was funded by the New York Council for Humanities.<sup>7</sup>

### **COMPILATION OF AFRICAN ESTABLISHMENTS IN BRONX**

During the duration of the grant, the project team was able to compile a list of African Establishments in the Bronx. These include: 16 *Masajid* (Mosques), 15 Churches, 19 African markets, 9 restaurants, 20 movie stores and other businesses, 6 hair braiding salons, 2 law firms, 4 community organizations, 1 women's organization, 1 research institution, 6 African-owned newspapers, and 1 website.

### **INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED**

The project team conducted more than 45 one-on-one oral history interviews during the grant period. Some of the interviews are transcribed and others are in the process of being transcribed. Some interviews are videotaped only, others are both videotaped and audio taped, while others are audio taped only. Participants came from Ghana, the Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Algeria. Several recurrent themes emerged from our research. The following pages outline some of these themes and the challenges faced by African immigrants in the Bronx

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<sup>7</sup> See attached "African Immigration to the Bronx" lecture series event flyers

## **EMERGING THEMES FROM THE RESEARCH**

Several recurrent themes emerged from our research activities among African immigrant communities. Some of these themes can be outlined as follows:

### **MIGRATION PATTERNS OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS**

Three migration patterns were identified in relation to contemporary African immigration to United States in general and to the Bronx in particular. These include: 1.) internal migration, that is, migration within the country of origin, characterized by rural-urban migration; 2.) inter-regional migration involving migration from one's country of origin to a neighboring country in the continent, for example, migration of Ghanaians from Ghana to Nigeria, or Sudanese from Sudan to Egypt; and 3.) international migration which involves migration from a country in Africa to a Western country, for instance, from Ghana to Canada, United States, Germany, Holland, etc., or from Nigeria to England or from Senegal to France, Belgium, etc.

Several routes were taken by African immigrants in the process of migrating to the United States. Each pattern of migration is determined partly by many factors, among them the migrant's economic and financial situation, point of departure within the country of origin, immigration policies within the country and those of the United States. Some people interviewed for this research migrated directly from their country of origin in Africa to the United States. Others went to other countries in Africa as refugees or asylum seekers then migrated to the United States after living in those countries for some time. For example, many people from Liberia and Sierra Leone sought refuge in Ghana first before migrating to the United States. Still others traveled to European countries notably Germany, England and France, then migrated to the United States after settling in those countries for some years. Most African immigrants interviewed were granted U.S. visas overseas, allowing them to travel to the United States legally. Upon arrival they applied for asylum or permanent residency that will allow them to stay and work legally in the United States. The waiting period to obtain permanent residency or the green card varies according to individual cases. However, waiting period may range from one to five years.

### **REASONS FOR MIGRATION**

There were several reasons that motivated recent African immigrants to migrate to the United States. For example, civil wars, political instability, and insecurity in many African countries in the 1980s to late 1990s forced many Africans to seek refuge and safety in the United States. This is true for people from Liberia, Sierra Leon, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Others came to pursue higher education, or to search for better economic opportunities and a better livelihood. Some came through the family reunification class – that is, to re-unite with family members already in the US. Still others came for a short visit or on tourist visa, and then decided to remain in the country. The perception that America is a land of opportunities and prosperity also motivated many African to immigrate to the United States. This is particularly true with immigrants who either, went to Europe first and then migrated to the United States, or those who secured a visa from a European country and another from the United States while in their original countries in Africa, but decided to come to the United States instead of Europe. There is a common perception and understanding that, social and economic situation, as well as peoples' attitudes towards immigrants in the United States is more favorable to immigrants from Africa than in Europe. In terms of gender dimension of migration, both women and men are involved in the migratory process. Women and men of all ages, educational attainment, class, region, religion, and marital status, etc. are participants in the migration process.

## **SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN THE BRONX**

Upon arrival in the United States many African immigrants interviewed first settled in other cities in the United States, or other boroughs of New York City, then moved to the Bronx later. Others, with family members who already resided in the Bronx, came directly there. Some of the reasons given for moving to the Bronx are cheaper rents, and the size of the African immigrant community in the Bronx. Rising rents in Harlem and large parts of Brooklyn has definitely been a factor in pushing African immigrants into the Bronx in the last ten years. In the Bronx, many Africans tend to concentrate in specific sections of the Bronx, in areas such as Morrisania, Morris Heights, Highbridge, South Fordham, and Tremont, among others.

## **WORK EXPERIENCES**

One of the recurrent themes throughout the interviews is the difficulty of getting a job in ones field of expertise. This is particularly true with immigrants educated in their countries in Africa who held jobs prior to their immigrating to the Bronx. As a result, upon arrival to the United States many African immigrants interviewed worked as gas stations attendants, car washers, cab drivers, dish washers, health care providers, parking lot attendants, waiters and waitresses, security guards, house cleaners, airport workers, cooks and night cleaners in schools and office buildings. Most interviewees work or had worked multiple jobs and for long hours. Nevertheless, some combine work and studying to gain the educational credential necessary to secure a better job and livelihood. This group tends to work at night to earn income to support their families both in the Bronx and in Africa, and study during the day. Others with entrepreneurship backgrounds establish businesses to cater to the needs of growing African communities in the United States as well as the host population. However, it is worth noting that those who owned businesses had often worked multiple jobs to earn the capital to establishing these businesses. Still others who completed their studies in the United States are able to secure well paying jobs in some institutions in the country, such as the United States Federal Reserve, academic and research institutions among others.

## **EDUCATION FOR UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY**

Education is often emphasized by the interviewees. It has been seen as the route to gain respect in a new country as well as a means to secure a better paying job and better economic and living standard. As a result of this perception, once they obtain their green card or permanent resident status in the United States, many African immigrants return to schools, colleges and universities to earn diplomas and higher degrees that will enable them realize their expectations. Similarly, the education of children is strongly emphasized and encouraged by parents and guardians. Consequentially, some of the interviewees who either came to the US at young age or those born in the US are either able to complete university and/or college or are pursuing university education.

## **REMITTANCES: MAINTAINING LINKAGES WITH THOSE LEFT BEHIND**

Almost all the people interviewed or parents of those interviewed send money regularly to their relatives and neighbors in Africa. One of the explanations given is that, sending money home is an obligation of those living abroad to help family members left behind. Some immigrants remit money for purposes of enhancing their social status and that of their families in their countries of origin, as well as a way of creating and/or maintaining linkages with the home land. Furthermore, there is expectation from the part of those left behind to receive money and other luxury goods from their relatives living in United States. The money remitted is used to build homes for the immigrants and their family members left behind, as well as to establish businesses and/or to improve educational programs for children in their countries. Building a home in ones country of origin is important in the sense that when one travels to Africa for a visit or vacation there is a

place to stay. Similarly, sending money home and building a home to return to, will earn them respect and dignity not only from ones family members, but also from neighbors and others. Therefore, through remittances and periodical visits to Africa, African immigrants are building communities and creating linkages both in the United States and the African continent.

### **THE DECISION TO RETURN**

There was no one answer to whether African immigrants plan to return to their countries or remain in the United States. Those immigrants, who migrated due to political problems, came from countries still experiencing political instability, or who feel that their lives will be threatened if they return often prefer to stay in the United States indefinitely. However, many interviewees, especially Ghanaians, prefer to retire in Ghana when they reach old age. Some participants especially those who came to the United States as adults, believe that retiring in one's country of origin is important because one will be among members of the extended family and relatives, and thus gaining the respect and dignity usually accorded to elders within African cultures and societies. This cultural understanding is usually juxtaposed with the situation in the United States in which the existing institutions that are serving and taking care of the senior citizens' needs are seen as alien to Africa societies. In many African societies, it is the responsibility of the children, especially male children to take care of their parents at old age. The decision to return might also explain partly the purpose of sending money to build homes and businesses in Africa. It is also important to note that although some people might prefer to stay in the United States, many of the interviewees do visit their countries regularly. Children are also encouraged to visit in order to learn indigenous languages and cultures and to bond with extended family members. Children are sent sometimes to school in the home country to teach them discipline and prevent them from being caught up in the street or "thug" culture that sometimes swallows up young people in Bronx secondary schools.

### **LANGUAGES SPOKEN**

African immigrants in the Bronx come from different West African countries. As a result, there are different indigenous languages spoken by these groups. Some of the languages mentioned during the interviews include Twi, Fanti and Ga (Ghana); Mina and Eowe (Togo); Berber, Arabic (Algeria) Soninke, Malinke, Fulani and Bambara (Mali, Gambia), Wolof (Senegal, Gambia), Igbo, Yoruba (Nigeria), Hausa (Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana – especially among the Muslims), among others. In addition to these indigenous languages, other languages spoken include, French, English, and Portuguese - the languages of former Western European colonial powers in Africa. These latter languages are also among the most commonly written languages.

### **MAINTAINING AFRICAN CULTURES IN EXILE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

Despite the fact that African immigrants in the Bronx are exposed to other socio-cultural practices and economic experiences, still some maintain indigenous traditions and cultural practices. For example, among the Ghanaians, there is the practice of selecting a representative of the Ashanti Queen and King in the Bronx, a practice common among the Ashanti people of Ghana. Similar ceremonies are held in other cities in the US with high concentration of Ghanaian immigrant population. Ghanaian immigrants further organize National Ghana Parade, picnic, and Ghana Independence day, every year which brings together Ghanaians and other African people to celebrate and showcase their vibrant cultures and traditions.

Other African immigrant communities have formed community organizations that address their concerns and interests. For instance, the Gambian immigrant community organizes annual events, such as picnics, that bring all members of their communities in the United States to celebrate their

history, socialize and interact with each other. Such events are usually organized during the summer. Variety of African markets and restaurants sell and service African foods. In addition, churches, mosques, and cultural centers represent other institutions that seek to preserve and maintain African indigenous practices in exile. It is through such institutions, therefore, that the younger generation of Africans and other residents of Bronx learn about African cultures and ways of life. Similarly, children are encouraged by their parents to learn their indigenous languages, and children from Muslim families in particular are encouraged to learn verses from the Qur'an (Islam's religious text) to strengthen their religious understanding. Parents and guardians play an instrumental role in this process of learning and upbringing.

## **RELIGION**

Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions practiced by African immigrants in the Bronx. According to one of our interviewee, Sheikh Moussa Drammeh, 75 per cent of Africans residing in the Bronx are Muslims. Many African-owned houses of worship – Churches and Mosques- have been established and used by African immigrants living in the Bronx. Some of the churches and mosques have branches in other boroughs of New York City, as well as other US cities where African immigrants are concentrated (see attached directory of African establishments in the Bronx). It is worth noting that these religious institutions serve both the religions and socio-cultural needs of the community. People come to church or mosque not only to pray, but also to meet with other fellow Africans, and seek services such as counseling and information about immigration, etc. from their religious and community leaders.

## **RACE RELATIONS AND STEREOTYPES**

The relationship between African immigrants and African Americans was brought up regularly as an issue in our oral history interviews. Many African immigrants interviewed mentioned unfriendly relationships between Africans and African Americans in the Bronx. They say too they are accused of taking up jobs that were usually done by African Americans. However, some research participants attribute the unfriendly relationships between Africans and African Americans to differences in life experiences, ignorance and lack of understanding of each other's communities. They argue that each group should take the initiative to understand the experiences of the other, in order to cultivate positive attitude toward each other. The issue of identity was also highlighted as one of the recurrent themes during our interviews. Recent African immigrants, especially the older generation, emphatically distinguish themselves from African Americans by emphasizing their African identity and way of life. This is reflected in the way they dress, socialize and the foods they eat. Relationships between Africans and the Dominican and Latino populations in the Bronx neighborhoods they inhabit, on the other hand, are mostly described as friendly.

The issue of stereotyping was another recurrent theme in the interviews. According to some participants, African immigrants sometimes encounter discrimination and harassment from other Bronx residents due to several factors. First, because of their darker skin color, the way they dress, their names, and accent, they are also laughed at, called names or harassed. This is particularly difficult for children attending public schools in the Bronx, especially those who came to the United States at a young age from Africa and who speak with accents. This situation had forced some African children to hide their African identity to avoid discrimination so as to fit into the 'acceptable' American lifestyle.

## **CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN BRONX**

Some of the challenges facing African immigrants in the Bronx include the following:

**Difficulty accessing healthcare services:** this is due to language barriers or limited English language skills of many Africans, especially women. As a result, many African immigrants find it difficult to explain their situation to Doctors and/or Nurses, which in turn make it difficult for the latter to provide health services. Many African immigrants also lack health insurance. Limited English language proficiency is particularly prevalent among French-speaking African immigrants and/or those who speak their indigenous languages. Often their children must translate for them at hospitals, health clinics, and during parent-teacher conference sessions in schools.

**Housing and safety issues** also represent other problems for African immigrants during initial stages of their settlement in the Bronx. Upon arrival many Africans live in apartments, in neighborhoods described as “unsafe,” rent rooms or live in extremely crowded conditions. However, after securing enough income through working multiple jobs, many participants interviewed purchased homes in newly built sections of the Bronx.

**Language and Education:** in addition to difficulties in accessing healthcare services due to lack of English language proficiency, some African immigrants also find it difficult to pursue educational opportunities due to similar problem. This is particularly common among immigrants from Francophone West African countries – Togo, Benin, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, etc. and among women immigrants.

**Demographic Data of African Immigrants in the Bronx:** According to the US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey, there are 36,177 Africans in the Bronx.<sup>8</sup> However, this figure, in our judgment, does not reflect the actual size of the rapidly growing African immigrant communities in the Bronx. Not one single African community leader we interviewed believes that statistic is accurate. Many claim that there are well over 100,000 African immigrants and their children living in the Bronx. The difficulty of having accurate demographic data on Africans in the Bronx can be attributed partly to the fact that many Africans, especially those who are in the country illegally or lack correct immigration documents might not be willing to participate in the census, or to seek services provided by the city. In other words, there is ‘fear of deportation’ among immigrants without proper immigration documents.

This ‘fear of deportation’ further makes some African immigrants not to cooperate with other government agencies such as fire inspectors, school officials, health department workers, and other social service providers. This in turn prevents them from securing government services to which they are entitled and which can improve their health and well being. In addition the census data does not allow the research team to estimate the number of African immigrant children born in the Bronx, for instance. One might get a better idea of the size of the African population in the Bronx by looking at the number of African children attending Bronx public schools.

**Gender role reversal and its impact on husband-wife relations** are other issues that emerged frequently in the interviews. Problems related to gender roles and relations seem to stem from the fact that there are differences of interpretations of gender relations and in particular, husband-wife relations in the United States and Africa. In many African societies and cultures, women and/or

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<sup>8</sup> Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey

wives are expected to obey, respect and uphold the views of their male relatives and/or husbands. Wife-beating is also accepted in some African societies. Moreover, in Africa, disputes between husband and wife were/are usually resolved by relatives of both the woman and the man. However, such practices and ways of solving familial problems are not in keeping with American laws and practices. Wife-beating, for example, is considered an abuse and is against the law in the US. Similarly, relatives and elders who usually deal with disputes between husband and wife are not readily present in the US. As a result, when domestic disputes occur, for example, people particularly women, often times resort to the police by calling 911. This shift in the way in which domestic disputes are addressed in the US creates more complications and further conflict not only between husband and wife but between parents and children as well.

Furthermore, given the economic difficulties facing many African immigrants in the Bronx, both husband and wife work to earn enough cash to sustain their families both in the US and in their country in Africa. This situation sometimes creates tension between husband and wife, especially if one of them feels that she/he is carrying the heavy burden of the work without the support of the other. Sending money to help relatives and families left behind sometimes creates misunderstanding, especially, when one partner feels that the other is sending more money to his/her family members left behind and is not contributing financially to the sustenance of the family in the US.

**Disciplining Children** is another issue raised by many participants, particularly those who are parents with school age children. In many African societies, disciplining of children is the responsibility of the parents, especially the father, and other members of the extended family. Similarly corporal punishment (spanking) is widely practiced in many African societies. However, such type of punishment is not allowed in the US and is considered to be child abuse, and is punishable by law. This situation made many African immigrant parents feel like they are losing control of their children and cannot bring up their children in a same way they were brought up – that is, being obedient and respectful to parents and elders, dressing decently, etc.

**Ethnic and religious stereotyping:** as indicated under section titled “race relations and stereotypes” analyzed above, almost all African immigrant interviewees experience the weight of ethnic stereotyping. However, African Muslims feel particularly stigmatized mainly because, of the way they dress, their religious practices and the tendency of some people within the host society to associate Islam and Muslims with “terrorism,” and “prospective terrorists” respectively, particularly after the September 11 attacks in the United States. The attacks on African Muslims near the Claremont Houses, which were published in the New York Times several months ago, certainly dramatize some of the tensions surrounding Islamic identity in the Bronx.

**Difficulty obtaining Green Card:** The process of obtaining Green Card represents one of the challenges facing African immigrants in the Bronx. During the interviews participants narrated difficulties they encountered in processing their immigration papers. Some male participants, particularly those who came to the US in the 1980s, claimed they had to enter into “marriages of convenience” with female American citizens (whereby they had to pay these women money to agree to the marriage) in order to facilitate the immigration process.

## **IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

The project’s activities have both immediate and long-term impacts. Through our activities, members of the African community, Bronx residents, civic and community institutions, Fordham students, staff and faculty, and others in greater New York City area, were introduced to and/or

expanded their knowledge and viewpoints of the accomplishments and contributions of African immigrants to the socio-cultural, economic, political, and intellectual fabric of the Bronx County and to that of their communities in Africa. This is evident in the presence of African-owned businesses, religious institutions – mosques and churches, community organizations and African immigrants’ commitment to remit money to family members left behind and investing in economic development and educational projects in their communities in Africa.

Similarly, our research activities brought, possibly for the first time aspects of greater importance to the African people to the fore front of public history and knowledge about Bronx residence. Evidently is, the numerous publicity of African immigrants’ activities and historical knowledge, in local media outlets both electronic and print media.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the research team is able to create linkages and partnership with African community and religious leaders, civic and community organizations based in the Bronx. For instance, partnerships are forged with the Bronx Museum of the Art, the Islamic Leadership School, and Masjid al-Iman, the Futa Islamic Center, the African People Alliance, Inc., and the Asantaman Association (USA) Inc., all based in the Bronx. Such linkages, indeed enabled Fordham University through its department of African and African American Studies to establish positive and collaborative working relations with these organizations, and became involved in some of the socio-cultural activities of the institutions above. For instance, on Sept 15, 2009, Dr. Jane Kani Edward and Dr. Mark Naison were invited to the Futa Islamic Center for ‘*iftar*’ or break-fast meal during the Muslims holy month of Ramadan. Furthermore, on May 26, 2009, Dr. Mark Naison and Dr. Jane Edward were invited to attend a ceremony in celebration of the Futa Islamic Center’s victory reclaiming the building that houses the Center from the Bronx County. Such invitations and others prove that the research team has gained the trust and respect of the community under study. It is also through such partnership initiatives, and trust building, students from Fordham University were able to intern in some of these institutions.

In addition, our activities, and in particular the lecture series we organized (2009/2010) had increased Fordham students’ awareness of the African continent, and the lived experiences of African immigrants in the Bronx. Such awareness further motivated many Fordham students to enroll in courses on African history, cultures and societies, offered at the University, as well as researching and writing about issues related to African immigrants in the Bronx, and in greater New York City area. It also led to the formation of the “African Cultural Exchange” students’ club at Fordham. The African Cultural Exchange organized its first “African Cultural Week” at Fordham’s Rose Hill campus in March 2010. Our activities further contributed for the first time in the History of Fordham University for the teaching of an African language “Twi” a language spoken in Ghana in the summer semester of 2010. Through our activities, members of the research team became well known not only among African immigrant communities living in the greater New York City area but in the African continent as well. Evidently, members of research team received and continue to receive numerous e-mail messages from individuals who learnt about and appreciated the work that we are doing among African immigrant communities in the Bronx.

Possible long-term impacts of the research on African immigrants in the Bronx include the development of a course on contemporary “African Immigration to the United States” to be taught in 2011/2012 academic year. This course will introduce students to the history of recent

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<sup>9</sup> See attached publicity materials



African immigration to the United States. The course will discuss issues such as, reasons for migration, migration patterns, settlement patterns, the formation of national and transnational identities, race and ethnic relations, and the socio-cultural, economic, political, and intellectual contributions of African immigrants to the host societies as well as their linkages with their communities in Africa.

Another long-term impact is the introduction of a graduate program on African studies at Fordham University to meet the growing interests of Fordham students in African Studies and issues of concern to the African continent. Given the increasing number of African immigrant children in Bronx, and New York City public schools, it became imperative to develop a school curriculum with a focus on African history, culture and other important aspects related to the African immigrant community to serve the interest of the growing school-age African population in Bronx and greater New York areas, as well as other Bronx residents.

Drawing from the above description and analysis, our activities and achievements further show that the initial goals of the project which intend to document and analyze the untold and/or neglected history of African immigrants, and their accomplishments and contributions both to the Bronx County and their communities in African is successfully achieved.

#### **DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

To publicize our research activities and its importance to the Bronx residents, Fordham University and other institutions and citizens of New York City, several dissemination activities were carried out during the duration of the grant. For instance, in fall 2009 and spring 2010, lecture series on “African Immigration to the Bronx” was organized to address critical aspects related to the African people. Six lectures were presented by distinguished African scholars and practitioners to diverse audience members. Audience responses were extraordinary. An overwhelming majority of attendees described the events as informative and educative, as well as introduced them to many aspects and contributions of Africans residing in the Bronx, which they were unfamiliar with.<sup>10</sup> The lecture series further provided a forum for discussion, exchanges and sharing of ideas and experience of African people living in United States in general and Bronx in particular.

Similarly, members of the research team participated in several events whereby they presented the goals of the project, its activities, accomplishments, and future plans. For instance, to help disseminate our activities, the research team created a Bronx African American History Project Facebook page, which now has more than 550 members. On July 5, 2010, a member of the research team, Dr. Jane Kani Edward gave a presentation on BAAHP’s African immigration research during the “History Makers Scholars Program” at Fordham University. The program was designed to bring students from New York City high schools who plan, to attend college to learn about college life and expectations. The students were particularly impressed with our research work and the achievements and contributions of African immigrants to the host society. Other dissemination activities included publishing the project’s activities and events on websites, such as the Ghana Web; other on-line media outlets; giving interviews to local newspapers, such as the New York Daily News, Fordham media outlets, etc. Furthermore, Dr. Jane Edward has submitted an abstract for a chapter titled “African Immigrants in the Bronx: Building Communities Abroad and at Home,” to be published in forthcoming a special issue of “Afro-Americans in New York

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<sup>10</sup> See attached “African Immigration to the Bronx” lecture series event flyers

Life and History” titled Beyond Burning - Blacks and Puerto Ricans in the Bronx: Community, Activism, Culture and Identity in New York City’s Northern Borough” edited by Dr. Brian Purnell.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

To insure the sustainability of our activities, the research team is in process to undertake the following steps:

- Developing a research proposal with a focus on West African Muslims in the Bronx to be submitted to Carnegie for funding in October 2010.
- Organizing consultation meetings with African community leaders, civic and educational institutions, educators, and New York Board of education to plan for the development of a curriculum for Bronx middle and high schools with focus on African immigration experiences, African history and cultures.
- Identifying more individuals to participate in oral history interviews.
- Continuing with transcription of recorded interviews.
- Publication of a book, book chapters and/or articles based on the research findings.
- Organizing a conference to discuss issues pertaining to African immigrant communities in the Bronx.
- Continuing outreach programs and tours of the Bronx to identify more African-owned businesses, houses of worship, community organization, etc.

### **POLICY RECONMENTATIONS**

During the duration of the grant period for this research, the research team had examined the situation of African immigrants in the Bronx to capture their varied and complex experiences in their efforts to adjust to American society. The research findings reveal two important perspectives pertaining to African immigrants in Bronx. First, the findings show the resilience and commitment of African immigrants in the process of adjustment to the host society. Such resiliency is exemplified by their hard work, establishment of businesses, socio-cultural, religious, and political institutions that serve as catalyst to address their social, cultural, economic, and political needs, as well as the needs of their communities in Africa and the Bronx. Second, the findings indicate that African immigrants face numerous challenges in the Bronx. These include, lack of English language proficiency, difficulty accessing health care, education opportunities, discrimination, culturally insensitive educational programs, among others.

To address the issues identified above, the study proposes the following interrelated recommendations which geared toward addressing the various stakeholders. In the context of the research, the stakeholders refer to the Bronx Public Schools, Colleges and, Universities, Bronx County elected officials, New York Board of Education, research funding institutions, hospitals and health care providers, and non-for-profit organizations servicing Bronx’s African immigrant communities.

First, given the growing number of African children in Bronx public schools, and their diverse backgrounds, the study recommends that educators and school officials initiate and develop programs that are sensitive to the children’s diversity and to be responsive to students’ needs. Of particular importance are the needs of children from Muslim family backgrounds, who follow some specific practices related to their religion, such as fasting during the Muslims holy month of Ramadan, and praying five times a day. Public Schools should provide a space for Muslim children to practice their religious rituals in conducive environment. Our research reveals that Africans in the Bronx are contributing immensely in revitalizing Bronx communities. Thus, it is

also imperative that the New York Board of Education should strive to develop a curriculum that is sensitive to African history and cultures, and experiences of African immigrants in the Bronx.

Second, the study recommends that service-providing agencies and New York Board of Education address the lack of English language proficiency, especially among Francophone Africans by providing funding for English as a second language programs. This could be done by recruiting members of the African community who are fluent in English language to teach in such programs. Given the cultural and religious backgrounds of African immigrants, hospitals and other health care providers should enact policies designed to recruit people from the African immigrant population who are knowledgeable with African cultures and traditions to work with and provide services to the community.

Third, the research findings also indicate that numerous indigenous African languages are spoken by Africans in the Bronx. Therefore, the study recommends that Colleges and Universities in the greater New York City area introduce programs for teaching such languages to facilitate greater understanding of socio-cultural aspects of the African people living in the Bronx.

Fourth, given the importance of research in shaping policies as well as enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions related to African immigrants, the study recommends that research-funding institutions in New York area should make an effort to provide funding to facilitate empirical and policy oriented research focuses on selected themes pertaining to the African immigrant community in the Bronx so as to uncover other untold historical knowledge about the African people.

Fifth, the study recommends that, all government agencies make a special effort to win the confidence of African immigrants by assuring them that their immigration status will not be compromised when dealing with state agencies such as police, fire department, and education and health institutions. The goal is to improve the cooperation between these state agencies and African immigrants as well as to minimize 'real' or imagined 'fear of deportation' held by many undocumented African immigrants.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally, all policy makers and community leaders should engage African immigrants of all backgrounds and experiences in accessing needs, in planning program content and delivery and in helping prioritize targeted needs of the community through appropriate participatory mechanisms.

## **NOTES**

[1] See attached Letter to Appellate Court in Support of Futa Islamic Center's Claim to 3400 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

[2] The information for the final section of report is attached as appendices.

[3] Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey

[4] See attached directory of African establishments in the Bronx

[5] Judith Moyer, "Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History," Online article, 1993, Revised 1999, [http://dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own.toolkit/oralhistory-html](http://dohistory.org/on_your_own.toolkit/oralhistory-html), last accessed, December 15, 2007.

[6] See attached "Guide Questions for the Study of African Immigrants in the Bronx"

[7] See attached "African Immigration to the Bronx" lecture series event flyers

[\[8\]](#) Source: US Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey

[\[9\]](#) See attached publicity materials

[\[10\]](#) See attached “African Immigration to the Bronx” lecture series event flyers

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WITH INSTITUTIONS IN THE BRONX

Several meetings with key individuals representing institutions working with African immigrants in Bronx and New York City at large were held. The main purpose of these meetings was to create linkages and collaborative efforts with these institutions. These meetings include the following:

**December 7, 2009:** Two members of the research team met with leader of the African People Alliance, Inc. to discuss issues of great importance to African immigrant community in Bronx and to forge partnership and collaboration.

**May 15, 2009:** a member of the project team met with a representative of Nah We Yone - a volunteer-driven organization dedicated to serving the African immigrant community- to discuss possible collaborative efforts and on how Nah We Yone can help recruit individuals from its membership to participate in oral history interviews.

**May 9, 2009:** three members of the project team met with the Imam and two members of the Futa Islamic Center Inc. at Fordham University to discuss legal issues related to the building, housing the Center and explore ways of addressing them.

**April 17, 2009:** a member of the project team attended the general assembly meeting of the Newark African Commission at the City Hall, Newark, New Jersey. The African Commission was created as part of the Mayor's Office to promote policies and awareness of issues concerning Africans, and people of African descent. The mission of the African Commission is to promote cultural, social, economic, political, educational, health and general well-being of the African Diaspora community, both in New Jersey and New York City.

**March 23, 2009:** meeting with staff of Highbridge Life Community Center, in the Bronx. The meeting was held at the Center. Staff of the center, were briefed about the objectives and activities of the project.

**January 15, 2009:** Meeting at Women Housing Economic and Development Corporation (WHEDCo). The purpose of the meeting was to brief the staff of WHEDCo about the project and how they could help in recruiting research participants from the African community members using their services.

**November 1, 2008:** meeting with editor of Amandla, an African community newspaper. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the editor about BAAHP's African immigration research and to explore ways of forging collaboration and partnership. The meeting was held at Fordham University, Rose Hill campus in the Bronx.

**September 12, 2008:** meeting with staff of Monroe College's Student Affairs and Public Relations departments to discuss African immigration research and collaborative efforts. The meeting was held at Monroe College, Bronx Campus.

**September 30, 2008:** Follow up meeting of African Immigration Forum held August 2, 2008, at the offices of American Friends Service Committee in Newark, New Jersey.

## Appendix 2

### **VISITS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS (PS) AND EVENTS ATTENDED**

#### **Visits to Public Schools in the Bronx**

**May 7, 2009:** visit to PS 55 with high concentration of African children. One of the project staff visited the school to talk to 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> graders about the importance of education, positive extracurricular activities, and high self-esteem.

**March 9 & 13, and April 5, 2009:** visits to Fannie Lou Hammer High School in the Bronx. Three staff of the project team visited the Media Class of Pamela Sporn at the school to explain to students the goals of the Bronx African American History Project, the causes of African immigration to the United States, and how to conduct interviews among immigrant community in the Bronx.

**October 29, 2008:** a visit to PS 55 in the Bronx. Two members of the project team visited the school. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about the school work and programs for African children and their families. The school has a high percentage of African children. Due to such concentration, the school has hired a Councilor from the African immigrant community to work with the children and their families on language skills, and to make sure that African and Islamic traditions are incorporated into the school culture.

#### **Events Attended**

**Sept 15, 2009:** Dr Jane Edward and Dr. Mark Naison were invited by members of the Futa Islamic Center during one of the '*iftar*' of break-fast meals during the Muslims' holy month of Ramadan.

**May 27, 2009:** Two members of the project team were invited to attend a press conference organized by the Futa Islamic Center, Inc. The purpose of the press conference was to celebrate the victory of the Center's leadership and worshipers in getting a Court of Appeals to return the building to its original owners ( it was sold on April 15, 2008). The press conference was attended by Bronx government officials, community leaders and worshipers.

**May 9, 2009:** three members of the project team attended a fundraiser event organized by Nah We Yone a volunteer-driven organization with a web-based office (<http://www.nahweyone.org>). The event was hosted by Nah We Yone, Inc and Fordham University's Department of African and African American Studies. All proceeds will benefit Nah We Yone's Fambul Camp, 2009 a weekend camp for children of African descent ages 5-16

**May 1, 2009:** a member of the project team attended a press conference organized by the New York City Muslim people of good-will and the students of Islamic Leadership School in honor of President Barack Obama and his message of inclusiveness during in his campaign and in his inaugural speech. Several Bronx Borough government officials, community leaders and Bronx residents attended and spoke at the event. The event was concluded by the recitation of President Obama's inaugural speech. The speech was recited by Muhammad Drammeh, a ten year old student from the Islamic Leadership School who has memorized almost all the speeches of President Obama. The event took place at the Masjid al Iman in the Bronx.

**March 7, 2009:** three members of the project team attended a Community Services Coordination Day and the second memorial anniversary of the Magassa – Soumare family fire tragedy that occurred in March 2007 in the Bronx. The event was held at PS 73 in the Bronx and was sponsored by several community organizations and New York City government institutions.

**February 26, 2009:** three members of the project team participated in a lecture titled “African Immigrants in the Bronx: New Cultural Currents.” The event was part of the “Bronx is Building Lecture Series” organized by the BAAHP team and sponsored by the New York Council for the Humanities, the Department of African and African American Studies and the Fordham College of Rose Hill Dean’s office.

**September 14, 2008:** four members of the project team participated in a street festival organized by the Bronx Museum of the Arts. The project team had a table to display the documents related to the project. The team was able to explain to people at the festival the project’s objectives and activities and was able to recruit potential participants and conducted an oral interview with one of the festival’s participant.

**August 2, 2008:** a member of the project team participated in the African Immigration Forum at Rutgers University, Newark, New Jersey. The forum was organized by the American Friends Service Committee Immigrants Rights Program in partnership with Rutgers University’s Center for African Studies. Several African and Africanist scholars, activists, artists, musicians, and practitioners presented and discussed issues related to African immigration and immigrants in the United States.

### Appendix 3

#### **PROJECT STAFF**

During the duration of the Carnegie grant the project is able to recruit the following staff:

**Dr. Bernard K. Hayford**, Research Consultant (Southern Connecticut State University)

**Dr. Maboula Souhmahoro**, Research Consultant (Barnard College)

**Kerima Zerrou** Senior Interviewer and Translator – French & English (United Nations)

**Amy Dufour**, Research Assistant (Columbia College)

**Ariana Alexandra**, Administrative Assistant (New York University)

**Kathleen Alexander**, Student Worker (Fordham University)

**Maty Sow**, Student Worker (Fordham University)

**Charles Johnson**, Student Worker (Fordham University)

**Dawn Russell**, Videographer and Documentary Film Consultant

**Omar Jawo** (PS 55, Columbia University) Community Researcher

**Kojo Ampah**, (Fordham University) Research Assistant



## **Appendix 4**

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

#### **Tour of the Bronx**

**August 6, 2008:** ‘drive around the Bronx’ was organized by Dr. Mark Naison and Dr. Jane Kani Edward. The exercise was successful as several African-owned businesses, such as, African food markets, African fabric and movie stores and hair braiding salons were identified. In addition, occasional walk around in Bronx neighborhoods were carried out with an aim of identifying more African-owned establishments, and to learn more about neighborhoods with high concentration of African immigrants.

**June 1, 2008:** A bus tour was organized for the Bronx Museum of the Art Board of Trustees and was guided by Dr. Mark Naison. One of the main purposes of the tour was to raise funds for the activities of Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP). The tour was successful as participants were able to learn about the history of the different historic neighborhoods, migration history, and the demographic changes taking place in the Bronx.

#### **Formation of BAAHP Youth Group**

The BAAHP youth group was formed in February 2009. The goal of the group is to send speakers to community organizations and schools in the Bronx who would like their students meet successful students and young college graduates of African immigrant families. Currently the group has five members, and with more recruitment underway, this number will increase. Membership in the group is open to non-African students, who are interested on issues related to Africa and African immigration.

#### **Archiving African-owned Newspapers**

The BAAHP’s youth group is in the process of archiving African-owned newspapers in a digital form for easy access to scholars, students and individuals interested on African immigration issues.

#### **Release Form**

In additions to the standard release form for research participants, the project team also designed a special release form for participants who want their identities kept confidential or anonymous (see appendix 6 for sample of special release form for research participants).

#### **Brochure**

A brochure outlining the goals and activities of the project is produced by the project team. In addition a short report on project activities carried out during the summer of 2008 (May 1<sup>ST</sup> – August 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2008), was also written.

#### **Project Staff Meetings**

Numerous staff meetings were held between August 2008 and May 2010. The main purpose of these meetings was to discuss, strategize and explore effective ways of carrying out the activities

of the project. In addition, the project team is always in correspondence through the email and phone, discussing issues related to the activities of the project.

### **Compilation and Review of Secondary Sources**

Extensive compilation and review of secondary sources dealing with issues related to African immigration to the United States in general, and Bronx in particular, was carried out. Several online articles and news papers dealing with different aspects of the African immigration to the United States are identified. Several scholarly books focusing on African immigration are also identified. The purpose was to identify studies done on African immigrants' conditions in the Bronx and other cities. These resources are also important and will be drawn on in the process of writing the final report, as well as for any publications resulting from the research findings. Below is the bibliography of the secondary sources compiled.

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## **Appendix 5**

### **DIRECTORY OF AFRICAN ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE BRONX**

#### **Introduction**

The Directory of African-owned businesses and establishments in the Bronx are compiled during the first phase of the grant period. These institutions and establishments can be broken down into the following: 15 Mosques, 15 Churches, 19 Markets, 9 Restaurants, 19 Movie Stores and other businesses, 5 Hair Braiding Salons, 2 Law Firms, 1 Women Organizations, 1 Community Organization, 1 Research Institution, and 1 school (Islamic Leadership School), 6 African-owned newspapers, 1 website. The compilation of the directory is an on-going process with regular updating of information.

#### **HOUSES OF WORSHIP**

##### **Mosques**

###### **1. Islamic Fallah of America Makky Jamme Masjid**

115 E, East 168st  
Bronx, NY 10452  
(718) 293-5287

###### **2. Islama Sunna Wal Jam'ah**

24 Mount Hope P 1  
Bronx, NY, 10462  
Phone: 718-731-2800

###### **3. Anjuman Hefazatul Islam**

365 E 198<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY 10458  
Phone: 718-733-0234

###### **4. North Bronx Islamic Centre**

3156 Perry Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10467  
Phone: 718-515-3559

###### **5. Islamic Cultural Centre of North America**

1-2 Miles SE –2000 Westchester Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10462  
Phone: 718-908-1111  
Website: [htt://www.iccna.org](http://www.iccna.org)

###### **6. Masjid – Ibahdouar Raman**

1-9 Miles W-65 E 183<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY 10454  
Phone: 718-563-6159

###### **7. Masjid Quba**

3520 Dekalba Ave.  
# 1 F Bronx, NY 10467

Phone: 718-515-9071

**8. Masjid Taqwa Wa-Jihad**

901 Anderson Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10452  
Fax 718-537-9310  
Email: farooqali@aol.com

**9. Parkchester James Masjid**

1203 Virginia Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10472  
Phone: 718-828-4194

**10. The Regional Council of Nigerian Muslim Organization, Incorporation**

P.O. Box 40553, Staten Island, NY10304, USA  
Phone: 718-342-7739

**Contact:**

Bro. Monsur Abubakar, President  
Bro. Ahmed K. Bello, Secretary General

Details: This council includes the following organizations:

- Imole Adinni Islamic Society, Bronx, NY
- Masjid Bab Us Salam Inc., Coney Island, Brooklyn, NY
- Nigerian American Islamic Mission, Newark, NJ
- Nigerian Muslim Association Inc. Brooklyn, NY
- Nigerian Muslim Community of Staten Island, NY
- Nigerian Muslim Council of New Jersey, Newark, NJ
- Nurudeen Islamic Charity Organization of New York Inc. Bronx, NY
- Zawayat Sofuwat L' Islam Inc. Brooklyn, NY

**11. The African Islamic Center Inc.\***

2044 Benedict Ave. (Parkshester), Bronx  
Phone: 718-239-8080  
Fax: 718-239-8066

**Services**

The Center in partnership with Muslim Women Institute for Research and Development, organizes food pantry services to the needy – Benedict Avenue Community Food Pantry (BACFP) three times a week: Tuesdays 8:00 am – 11:00 am, Thursdays 3:00 pm -6:00 pm, and Fridays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. The program serves approximately 3,000 – 3,500 persons per month.

**12. Loogman Islamic Cultural Center\*\*\*\***

Masjid Loogman  
E 169<sup>th</sup> Street & Findlay Avenue

**13. Masjid al-Iman**

1274 Pugsley Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10462



Phone: (718) 892-5555  
E-mail: [info@masjidaliman.org](mailto:info@masjidaliman.org)  
Contact: Sheikh Moussa Drammeh

**14. The Futa Islamic Center Inc.**

3400 -166<sup>th</sup> Street and Third Avenue (Corner of 166<sup>th</sup> S 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue)  
P.O. Box 791  
Morrisania, Bronx, NY

**15. Islamic Cultural Center**

E166th Street (Corner of E166th & Clay Avenue)  
Bronx, New York

**16. Mount Hope Masjid**

Islamic Sunatul Jama'ah  
24 Mount Hope Place  
Bronx, NY 10453  
Phone: (718) 731-2800  
E-mail: [mounthopemasjid@yahoo.com](mailto:mounthopemasjid@yahoo.com)

**Churches**

**1. The Blood of Jesus Pentecostal**

Ministry International  
386 East 161th Street, (between Cortland and Melrose Avenues)  
Bronx, NY 10451  
Phone: 646-670-4415, 646-359-1412  
Contact: Prophet Ernest Amoateng, Host Pastor

**2. The Redeemed Christian Church of God**

1001-1005 Morris Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10456  
Contact: 718-293-8996, 718-944-2250, or 646-418-0393  
Website: [www.rccgchapelofrestoration.org](http://www.rccgchapelofrestoration.org)

**3. The Grace of God Ministries, Inc.**

971-973 E233rd Street  
Bronx, NY 10466  
Contact  
718-325-4358

**4. Christ Apostolic Church Int.**

483 East Tremont Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10457  
Contact Person: Pastor Danquah  
Tel.: 646-662-3241

**5. Christ Apostolic Church Int. has a branch in Newark, NJ**

263 Halsey Street 3<sup>rd</sup> FL. Newark, NJ, 07102 (between Williams Street and Halsey and Diane Sultan Plaza, downtown Newark).

Contact: Pastor Oduro  
Tel.: 908-222-8176

**6. Christ Apostolic Church (Living Hope Chapel)**

One Fold, One Shepherd  
743 East 187<sup>th</sup> Street Bronx, NY 10458  
Phone: (347) 964-7451  
Prayer Line: (347) 236-1000  
Website: [www.caclivinghopechapel.org](http://www.caclivinghopechapel.org)  
Minister-in-Charge: Pastor Michael Oladudu

**7. Christ the King Catholic Church and School**

141 Marcy Place of the Grand Concourse  
Phone:

**8. North Bronx Ghana Seventh-day Adventist Church**

401 Castle Hill Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10473-1608  
Pastor: Dwayne Turner

**9. North Bronx Ghana SDA Church Ghana**

1714 Melville Street  
Bronx, NY  
Phone: 718-863-6352

**10. Seven Days Adventist\*\*\***

Between E 168-169 Streets & Grand Concourse  
The Bronx, NY

**11. Action Church**

4395 Byron Avenue,  
238 Street Nereid on Byron,  
The Bronx

**12. Royal House Chapel International**

New York Mission  
901 East Tremont Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10460  
Tel. (646) 314-6001  
Fax (646) 330-6003  
Email: [royalhouseman@aol.com](mailto:royalhouseman@aol.com)

**Contact:**

Rev. Joseph Essilfie, Pastor  
Rev. Sam Korankye-Ankrah, Apostle General

**13. Eagles Nest International Chapel**

2056 Cross Bronx Exp.  
Bronx, NY  
Tel (719) 239-1242

**14. Citadel of God Almighty Bronx Assembly**

1274 Bronx River Ave.  
Bronx, NY10472  
Tel. 516-330-1146 or 718-658-8981  
Evang, Joseph Famuyide  
Minister –in-Charge

**15. Ghana united Methodist Church**

1951 Washington Ave.  
Bronx New York  
Tel. 646-401-9970

**BUSINESSES**

**Markets**

**1. Gold Coast Trading Co.**

381 Canal Place  
Bronx, NY 10451  
Tel.: 718-292-5302  
Fax 718-292-8409  
Website: [www.firstgoldcoast.com](http://www.firstgoldcoast.com)

Previously located at #18 Bronx Terminal market, it is now located at 381 Canal PL and E144 Street behind Lincoln Hospital opposite Deeper Life Church in the Bronx. The store sells wholesale/retail all kinds of African foods – fresh Yam, Gari, Pounded Yam, Elubo, Rice, Moi Moi, Beans-all kinds, Goat meat, frozen Tilapia fish, frozen Croaker fish, chicken and chicken parts, snails, stock fish, palm oil, egushie, ogbono, etc. The store has a branch at 2110 Cortelyou Road, Corner of Flatbush Brooklyn, NY.

The store also sells African garments, fabrics, jewelry and artifacts.

**2. African Market (Wholesale and Retail)**

540 Fails Street (Hunts point Market)  
Bronx, NY  
Tel.: 718-378-4200  
Contact Person: John Okoro

**Products**

Bales of Stockfish, Farina, Rice Flour, Semolina, Plantain Fufu, Coco Yam Fufu, Pounded Yam, Rice, Corned Beef, Africana Sardine and Titus Sardine, Cosmetics and Soap, all ingredients for Soup, Achi, Ogbono, Okra, Egusi, Crocker fish, all types of Frozen fish, Cow feet, Turkey, Cow skin, Beverages, Provision. The store now accepts all credit cards and EBT, Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express.

The biggest African food warehouse in the United States branch – 681 East 136 Street between Bruckner Blvd. and 136 Street, Bronx, New York. Previously the store was located at the Bronx Terminal Market # 48.

**3. One Stop African Market\***

110 E149 Street,  
Bronx, NY (between Exterior and Gerald)

Tel.: 718-583-8283, 718-585-4046

Fax: 718-585-4039

The market is the distributor of all African food and beauty creams.

**Products**

Food items include Goat meat, Cow foot, Cow skin, Torofai Garden egg, Red oil, Plantain Fufu/Cocoyam, Gari, Elubo, Pounded Yam, Broken rice

Beauty Supplies

Clothes: Laces, Head ties, Shoes, Bags, Jewelry.

**4. Nasem NM Market\***

Nasem C & K African

Farmer's Market, USA Inc.

209 E 138<sup>th</sup> Street,

Bronx, NY 10451

Tel.: 718-401-5005

Fax: 718-401-7228

Products: Latin, African, Caribbean, Seafood, Poultry, Meat, Groceries and much more (wholesale and retail)

**5. Kingdom Projects Inc.**

(Kingdom Foods) An African Market

2957 Webster Avenue by Bedford Park Blvd. (200<sup>th</sup> Street)

Bronx, NY

Contact Person: Moses

Phone: (718) 620-8000

**Products**

Kingdom Foods specialized in African, Caribbean, American, Mexican food products. The store sells fresh killed goat meat, fresh goat head (Isiewu) and tripe (intestines); All types of frozen fish (Tilapia, Croaker, Red snapper); Other meat products include, Oxtail, Cow skin, Cow feet, Beef, Smoked Chicken, Smoked Turkey; and other African food stuff at wholesale prices. The store also carries all kinds of top quality products including Avon products, African Movies and Christian Movies at reasonable prices and have promotional offer on selective items.

**6. African and Caribbean Market \*\*\***

E. Tremont & Jerome Ave.

**7. Iman African Market \*\*\***

Jerome Ave. & E 170<sup>th</sup> Street

**8. African Halal Meat Market \*\*\***

Jerome Ave. & E 170<sup>th</sup> Street

**9. Maa Adwoa's Connection African Market \*\*\***

59 W & 170<sup>th</sup> Street

Phone: 718-538-4500

**10. Adum African Market \*\*\***

Whole Sale and Retail/Owusek Music Center in New York

Edward Grant Street & 167<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY

**11. African Unity International Market \*\*\***  
Whole Sale and Retail  
1009 Ogden Avenue & 167<sup>th</sup> Street

**12. African Market \*\*\***  
167<sup>th</sup> Street (off Jerome Avenue)  
Phone: 718-293-5668

**13. African Market \*\*\***  
209 E & 165<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sheridan Ave. & Grant Street  
Phone: 718-410-0824

**14. African and American Halal \*\*\***  
169 Street & Walton Ave. or 2 blocks from WHDCO

**15. Gambissara Halal Meat and Grocery Store \*\*\***  
E 169<sup>th</sup> Street & Grants

**16. Sanbra African Market**  
861 E Tremont Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10460 – 4206  
Phone (718) 294-3300

**17. Sahara African Caribbean Supermarket Inc.**  
472 E. Tremont Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10457  
(Corner of Washington Ave.)  
Wholesale and retail of meats, fish, African foods and groceries  
Tel. (718) 294-1473  
Fax (347) 879-6951  
Email: [sahara51@optonline.net](mailto:sahara51@optonline.net)

**18. Adehye International Market**  
1621 Unionport Road  
Bronx, NY 10462

**19 OW African Market**  
3395 Third Avenue  
Bronx NY  
(Between third Ave. & E166th  
Tel: 712924653

## **RESTAURENTS**

**1. Motherland Cuisine**

3926 White Plains Road  
Williamsbridge  
Bronx, NY 10466  
Soul Food, Bronx

This new Williamsbridge café is the Ghanaian mother lode, serving up Comfort food like mashed potato fufu and crushed-rice omotouo with the usual range of sauces (called "soups")—eguishie is particularly good, made with crushed melon seeds and greens stewed into vegetable richness.

**2. Sankofa African Restaurant \*\*\***

2255 Webster Avenue (Intersection of Webster Avenue and Ford or between 182<sup>nd</sup> and 183th streets)  
Bronx, NY 10457  
Phone: (718) 733-7876  
The restaurant serves halal West African (Nigerian/Ghana) Food

**3. African American Restaurant Marayway \*\*\***

E 170<sup>th</sup> Street

**4. Eddies Place African Food Prod**

SE 167<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY 10452  
Phone (718) 293-5668

**5. African Grill & soul Food**

2041 Davidson Ave. (corner of W. Burnside Ave.)  
Bronx, NY 10453  
Tel.: 718-584-8300/718-584-8500  
Eat in and Take out

**6. Maruche Executive African Restaurant and Boutique**

413 Soundview Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10473  
Tel.: 718-328-3770  
E-mail: [uche@marucherb.com](mailto:uche@marucherb.com)  
Website: [www.marucherb.com](http://www.marucherb.com)

**Services:**

Offer a rich selection of African Dishes – Ogbono, Egwusi, Odra, Onugbu, Yam Porridge, and Jollof Rice with Meat & Peas, Vegetable Soup with Fufu or Eba/Amala, Pepper Soup, Beans & Plantain with Meat, Oxtail, Jerk Chicken, Curry Goat & Chicken, Goat Head, and Ugba.

**7. Grin African American Restaurant Inc.**

454 E. 168<sup>th</sup>  
Bronx, NY 10456  
Tel. 718-292-8764

The restaurant serves African dishes, Dbe, Foufou,

**8. Last Stop African Restaurant & Market, Inc.**

3535 Holland Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10469  
(Between 211<sup>th</sup> & 212<sup>th</sup> street)  
Tel. 718-547-4797

The restaurant serves homemade Nigerian/African style foods such as goat head, ngwobi, stock fish pepper soup, goat meat pepper soup, suja, etc. and is open seven days a week. The restaurant also hosts birthday parties only. Every Friday is a leisure night of classic 1940s music old school night.

#### **9. Jalloh Family Restaurant**

3396 Third Avenue  
Bronx NY  
(Between third Ave. & E166th St.)  
Tel: 718-292-5015

### **MOVIE STORES AND OTHER BUSINESSES**

#### **1. Femmy Rekson USA INC.**

Head Office  
1627 Pupham Avenue  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Bronx, NY 10453  
Contact  
646-463-6961, 610-534-1276  
Email: rekson@juno.com  
Website: www.femmyrekson.com  
Specialized in Music, Video and T-Shirts

#### **2. Agogo African Movie House, Phone Cards\*\*\***

Intersection of W190 & Jesup Avenue  
Bronx, NY

#### **3. Family Link Money Transfers (Inc.)**

Specialist Money Transfer to Ghana  
Phone: (718) 294-3300  
College Avenue & E 167 Street

#### **4. Selly's Fashion and Boutique, NY**

Tel.: 718-751-6238  
The Boutique has exclusive European imports – Austria, Switzerland, women and men's shoes.

#### **5. Debest Fashion**

Tel.: 718-723-0132, 718-781-5119  
E-mail: toakin@netzero.com  
Fola Akingajo, Director

Debest Fashion for latest fashions in men and women attires, imported from Europe. Assorted fabrics (Lace, Voile, Jacquard Guinea Brocade, etc.), Exclusive ladies shoes and bags, Ladies head ties (Gele), Men's shoes, Fashion accessories for men and women, Wholesale and retail available, Aso Ebi, Ship coast to coast, USA.

**6. African Movies Mall\***

179A East 165<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Bronx, NY 10456  
(On 165<sup>th</sup> street, between Grand Concourse and Sheridan Avenue)  
Tel.: 718-503-5040/718-293-9880  
Fax 718-293-9870  
Toll Free: 866-552-0200  
The Mall carries movies in English, Ghana, Yoruba and Hausa

**7. West African Movies**

1692 Webster Avenue  
(Between 173<sup>th</sup> & 174<sup>th</sup> street on Webster Ave.)  
Bronx, New York 10457  
Tel. (718) 731-2190 or (718) 731-2191 or 347-963-9341

**8. Executive Image and African Movies**

2811 White Plains Road  
Bronx, NY 10467  
Tel.: 347-920-3512

**9. Fofana's Shop**

1723 Boston Road  
(Between 173-174), Bronx, NY  
Tel: Store: (718) 617-6977  
Tel: Cell: (917) 526-8526

**Products**

Hand bags, shoes, jewelry, cosmetic, African cloths, Africa shoes, human hair, hair accessories, legs, Wax Holland, DVD, phone cards, and much more.

**10. Hollywood African Movies and CD'S\***

1514 Castlehill Avenue  
Bronx, NY, (between Starling Street & Manning Street  
Near Castlehill Avenue # 6 Subway Station)  
Phone: (718) 684-5796  
Website: mncadoo@yahoo.com

**Products**

The store carries variety of African movies and CD'S, both retail and wholesale. The store carries new arrival every Friday, and is open 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday to Saturday.

**11. African Media Productions, Inc (AMP)**

199 Lincoln Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl. Suite 202  
Bronx, NY 10454  
Phone: 718-402-1615  
Fax: 718-401-4636  
Website: <http://www.africmedia.com/contact.html>

**12. Post N' Parcel**



Worldwide Shipping Services  
Your neighborhood Postal Center  
236 Gun Hill Road  
Bronx, NY 10467

Tel. (718)324-9825, Fax (718) 324-9823

**Services:** Shipping supplies, professional packaging, fax, copies, mailbox rentals, bill payment center, money orders, Resumes, notary, typing services, rubber stamps/vigo and money gram.

Working hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 am – 7 pm, Saturday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

**13. Attamens and Associates, LLC**

250 E Gun Hill Road  
Bronx, NY 10467

Tel. (718) 515-0192, Cell: (646) 302-1586

Fax (718) 515-0195, Email: attamenstax2000@yahoo.com

**Services:** Income tax, accounting, travel, real estate and notary

**Contact:** Nana Atta-Mensah, President

**14. Shu-Travel Services Inc.**

International and Domestic  
701 E 219<sup>th</sup> Street (Corner of 219 Street)  
Bronx, NY 10467

Tel.: 1-718-535-7866/1-718-576-1537

Fax: 1-718-766-5143

E-mail: [shutravels@yahoo.com](mailto:shutravels@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.shuttravel.com](http://www.shuttravel.com)

**Services:** Income Tax, Vacations and Cruises, Car Rental & Hotels, Tour Packages/ Hajj & Umrah, Travel Insurance, D.V. Visas, Court Interpreters/Translators

**15. Kuwait Shipping Packaging Corp.**

3353 Third Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10456 (between 165<sup>th</sup> and 166<sup>th</sup> streets)  
Phone: (718) 292-6779, Fax: (718) 292-2234

**16. West African Center**

185 E 165<sup>th</sup> Streets (between Grand Concourse and Sheridan Avenue)  
Bronx, NY 10456

Phone: (718)293-3594, Fax: (718) 293-2982

**Services:** money grams, money transfer, African fabrics, phone cards

**17. Alive Auto Repair Center**

Foreign and Domestic  
994 Brook Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10451

Contact person: FRED

Phone: (347) 270-0594, Cell: (917) 859-0070

**18. Prestige Tour & Travel Promotion Inc.**

Contact: 1-800-232-9638, Bronx: 718-295-6100, New York: 212-779-8371

E-mail: [eddie@flyprestige.com](mailto:eddie@flyprestige.com)

Website: [www.flyprestige.com](http://www.flyprestige.com)

**19. African Quality Import and Export, Inc**

994 Brook Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10451  
Cell: 347-613-1500, Tel. 718-618-0830  
Fax: 718-402-6152, E-mail: [www.africanquality@aol.com](mailto:www.africanquality@aol.com)  
President: Djemebou T. Kouyate

**20 Family Link Money Transfer Inc.**

293 E 167<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bronx, NY 10458  
Phone: (718) 293-6284  
Fax: (718) 293-1790  
Website: [www.familylinktransfer.com](http://www.familylinktransfer.com)  
E-mail: [family\\_ink@msn.com](mailto:family_ink@msn.com)  
Contact person: Nana Owusu Manu, General Manager/Marketing Manager

Description: Family Link Money Transfer Inc. is a licensed international money transmitter, banking department of New York and New Jersey. It transfers money to Ghana and Ghana Commercial Bank agent.

**HAIR BRAIDING SALONS**

**1. Elise African Hair Braiding**

2150A Starling Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10462  
Phone- Shop: 718-931-1754, Phone- Cell: 917-623-7875  
The Salon braids all African styles and many more

**2. African Hair Braiding Xpress and Beauty Supplies**

Clay Street & E 167<sup>th</sup> Street

**3. Zainab African Hair Braiding**

1915 Washington Ave  
(Intersection of E Tremont and Washington Ave)

**4. Precious Ladies Beauty Salon**

3054 Fenton Avenue  
Bronx, NY  
Tel.: 718-654-0442 or 917-518-2104  
Direction: take Bus #28 to "Fish", Train #5 to Gun Hill Road, by car – 1-95 N to Gun Hill Road  
Owner: Nene  
**Services:** Braiding, flat twists, weaving, curling & more. The salon also carries a wide range of beauty products.

**5. Maty African Hair Braiding**

2213 Westchester Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10462

**6. Hair Braiding**

214 E. Fordham Road, Gold Palace Jewelry  
(Between Grand Concourse and Valentine Avenue)  
Phone: (917) 659-3800

Services: corn row, twist waves, invisible braid and many, many other hair styles.

## **LAW FIRMS**

### **1. OLA-OLU Agbaje, P.C.**

Attorneys-at-law  
3550 White Plains Road,  
Suite 11, Bronx, NY 10467  
Tel.: 718-231-1353, Fax 718-324-0916

**Services:** Accidents and personal injury claims, asylum, deportation, work permits, green card and other immigration matters, real estate closings, criminal defense, divorce, bankruptcy, traffic tickets. Family court practice: order of protection, child support, custody and visitation, landlord and tenants.

### **2. Law Office of John K. Akpalu and Associates, P.C.**

(Member of American Immigration Lawyers' Association)  
714 Morris Park Avenue (at White Plains Road)  
Bronx, NY 10462  
Near Parkchester and close to 22, 36, 38 Buses & #2 Train  
Tel. 718-828-0888

**Services:** Immigration & uncontested divorce, workers compensation, social security, disability, accidents, real estate – buying, selling, refinance.

## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

### **1. Nah We Yone (a Sierra Leonean Organization) \*\***

A concerned group striving to improve the welfare of displaced Africans  
Current mailing address of the above organization is:

P.O. Box 141087  
Staten Island, NY 10314-1087  
Tel: 1-646-417-5676, Fax: 1-718-815-8902  
E-mail: [nayweyone@nahweyone.org](mailto:nayweyone@nahweyone.org); <http://www.nahweynde.org>

### **2. Togolese Americans United for Progress (T.A.U.P.)**

Contact Person: Kouma, President  
Email: [mdt\\_ny@yahoo.com](mailto:mdt_ny@yahoo.com)

### **3. Asanteman Association (USA) Inc.\*\***

Asnatefuohene-NY  
3340 Paulding Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10469  
Phone: (718) 513-1372, (646) 361-1367  
E-mail: [Nanaamponsh3@yahoo.com](mailto:Nanaamponsh3@yahoo.com)

### **4. African People Alliance, Inc.\*\***

1755 Weeks Avenue, # A4  
Bronx, NY 10457

Phone: (347) 575-4025  
E-mail: [tititogo@hotmail.com](mailto:tititogo@hotmail.com)  
Contact Person: Mr. Djounedou Titikpina (TITI), President

Services: Immigration, health care, education, cultural exhibition, housing, and legal assistance.

### **WOMEN ORGANIZATON**

#### **1. Sauti Yetu Center for African Women, Inc**

P.O. Box D  
New York, NY 10034  
Tel.: 718-665-2483, Fax 718-665-2483  
Email: [zeyega@sautiyetu.org](mailto:zeyega@sautiyetu.org)  
Web: [www.sautiyetu.org](http://www.sautiyetu.org)  
Program Director: Zeinab Eyega  
Phone: (718) 665-2486

### **RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

#### **1. Muslim Women's Institute for Research and Development**

1363 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452  
Phone: 917-529-5242, Fax: 718-960-2262

### **SCHOOLS**

#### **1. Islamic Leadership School**

2008 Westchester Avenue  
Bronx, NY  
Phone: (718) 904-1111, Fax: (718) 239-4234

### **AFRICAN-OWNED NEWSPAPERS**

**1. African Abroad**, USA Weekly. Is distributed in New York, Washington DC, New Jersey, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Chicago, Ohio, Maryland, Philadelphia, Boston, Colorado, Minnesota, Austin, Cincinnati, New Haven.

Contact: E-mail: [apoye@aol.com](mailto:apoye@aol.com)

Website: [www.africanabroad-usa.com](http://www.africanabroad-usa.com)

The paper is distributed free of charge and it reaches 250,000 readers monthly.

#### **2. Light of the World**, New York, NY

Contact: E-mail: [christislight@aol.com](mailto:christislight@aol.com)

Tel.: (718) 938-7966

Fax (718) 504-3814

The paper is also distributed in the following cities: New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Kentucky. The paper is free on News Stand.

#### **3. U.S. Immigration News** – A Division of the Law Office of Joseph Fmuyide –

[www.usimmigrationnewspaper.com](http://www.usimmigrationnewspaper.com) – [USCISNews@aol.com](mailto:USCISNews@aol.com)

Subscription \$1 per issue, News Stand free.

**4. New York Griot**, Journal de la Diaspora Africaine et Francophone, Bi-Lingual Edition, English-French, P.O. Box 1825 New York, NY 10026, Phone: (718) 775-3900, [legriotny@yahoo.com](mailto:legriotny@yahoo.com)

**5. Amandla**

An African Community Newspaper  
P.O. Box 7030WOB  
West Orange, NJ 07052  
Phone/Fax: 1-866-2626352  
Contact: Kofi Ayim, Editor

**6. The Diaspora Star**

African Diaspora First Tabloid  
Tel.: 718-341-8345  
Website: [www.thediasporastar.com](http://www.thediasporastar.com)  
E-mail: [eudoh@aol.com](mailto:eudoh@aol.com)  
The paper is distributed free and can be found in African-own stores in the Bronx and other cities.

**WEBSITES**

**1. Ghana Home Page**

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/diaspora>

**Sources Cited**

**African Abroad**, USA Weekly, Vol. 7, No. 22, November 30, 2006, New York, Washington DC, New Jersey, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Chicago, Ohio, Maryland, Philadelphia, Boston, Colorado, Minnesota, Austin, Cincinnati, New Heaven.

Contact: E-mail: [apoye@aol.com](mailto:apoye@aol.com)

Website: [www.africanabroad-usa.com](http://www.africanabroad-usa.com)

The paper is distributed free of charge and it reaches 250,000 readers monthly.

Ibid, Vol. 9, No. 11, June 15, 2008, Tel. (718) 276-4300, Fax: (718) 978-3562

**Light of the World**, Vol. 3, No. 49, December 2006, New York, NY

Contact: E-mail: [christislight@aol.com](mailto:christislight@aol.com)

Tel.: (718) 938-7966

Fax (718) 504-3814

The paper is also distributed in the following cities: New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Kentucky. The paper is free on News Stand.

\*Information obtained from the store's business card during a visit to the locations.

\*\*Information provided by a research participant interviewed on May 5, 2007.

\*\*\* Information Collected during "Drive around the Bronx" Tour, August 6, 2008

[http://newyork.citysearch.com/yellowpages/directory/New\\_York\\_NY/210/393/page2.html](http://newyork.citysearch.com/yellowpages/directory/New_York_NY/210/393/page2.html)

(<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=3926+White+Plains+Road,Williamsbridge>)

**U.S. Immigration News**, Vol. 2, No. 27 1, 2008 – A Division of the Law Office of Joseph Fmuyide – [www.usimmigrationnewspaper.com](http://www.usimmigrationnewspaper.com) - USCISNewsAaol.com  
Subscription \$1 per issue, News Stand free.

Ibid. vol. 3, no. 37, April 1, 2009

**New York Griot**, Journal de la Diaspora Africaine et Francophone, Vol. 4, No. 42, June 1-15, 2008. Bi-Lingual edition English-French, All African Newspaper, P.O. Box 1825 New York, NY 10026, Phone: (718) 775-3900, [legriotny@yahoo.com](mailto:legriotny@yahoo.com)

Ibid. April 15-30, 2009

**Ghana Home Page**

Website: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/diaspora>

## **Appendix 6**

### **GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDYE OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE BRONX**

#### **Introductory Note**

My name is (.....). I am a (.....),  
Department of African and African American Studies, Fordham University. Today is (-----  
-----). I am conducting Oral History Interview with (-----). The  
interview will last for about 2 hours. The interview is taking place in -----  
-----

Please spell your full name to help us in the transcription process.  
-----

#### **Topics for Discussion**

#### **Guide Questions for Studying African Immigrants in the Bronx**

##### **Biographical Information**

Tell me/us about your country of origin, religion, where do you live in the Bronx, languages spoken/written, etc.

How many languages are spoken in your country?

##### **Educational Experience**

Where did you start your schooling?

If in the Bronx, Tell me/us about your (or your children's) experiences in the Bronx's school system.

Tell me/us about your experience as a student at the college you are studying - e.g., describe your interactions with the faculty, staff and students.

##### **Work Experience**

Tell us about your work experience (if employed), e.g., how did you get the job? How many jobs did you do since you came to the United States? Etc.

##### **Family Life/Migration Patterns**

When did you or your family migrate to the Bronx?

Did you or your family settle in another country /countries before migrating to the United States?

If yes, what is/are the country/countries?

Did you or your family settle in another state(s), or city/cities in the United States, before coming to the Bronx?

If yes, please give the name of the state(s), or city/cities.

##### **Reasons for migration**

Why did you or your family migrate to the US/Bronx?

Could you describe your migration experiences during the migratory process? For example, services you received from others, and challenges encountered.

##### **Nationalities in your Neighborhood**

How many different nationalities are living in your neighborhood? That is, people from other countries including African countries.

What is the dominant group in the neighborhood?

What is the dominant African group in the neighborhood?

**Neighborhoods with High Concentration of African Immigrants**

Tell me/us the neighborhoods with high concentration of African immigrants in the Bronx?

Why are there many Africans in these neighborhoods?

**Race and ethnic Relations**

Describe the relations between African immigrants and

White Americans,

African-Americans,

Hispanic Americans/immigrants, and

Other African immigrant communities in your neighborhood

**Economic Issues**

What economic activities, businesses carried out by African Immigrants in the Bronx?

Why is it important to establish African businesses?

What are some of the economic difficulties facing African immigrants in the Bronx?

**Food**

Are there African restaurants in the Bronx that you know?

If yes, tell me/us their names and locations.

What kind of food do these restaurants serve?

**Gender Relations**

What is the impact of life in the United States on gender relations of immigrants – gender roles, gender division of labor, power relations, etc?

**Church/Mosque**

Do you know of Churches/Mosques established by African immigrants in the Bronx? If yes, what are the names of these Churches/mosques?

What kinds of services are provided by the Church/mosque?

What is the role of Church/Mosque (religion) in your life/in your community?

**Community Organizing**

Are there community association(s)/organization(s) established by African immigrants in the Bronx that you know?

If yes, what are the names of the associations/ organizations?

When did the organization(s) establish?

What are the objectives, activities, and management structure of the organization(s)?

Why is it important to establish community organizations?

Where do the organizations get funding for their activities?

What are some of the challenges faced, if any?

What are some of the steps taken to address these challenges/problems?

**Women's organizations**

Are there African women organizations in the Bronx? If yes, tell me/us about it

If not, why there are no African women's organizations?

What are the objectives, activities, and management structure of the organizations?

Why is it important to establish women's organizations?

Where do the organizations get funding for their activities?



What are some of the challenges faced, if any?  
What are some of the steps taken to address these challenges/problems?

### **Housing**

Do you or your family own a house?  
Tell me/us about housing issues experienced by you or your family in the Bronx?  
If there are housing problems, what do you think should be done to improve housing problems?

### **Legal Issues Related to Immigration**

What legal issues concerns African Immigrants?  
Are there legal institutions established and run by African immigrants?  
What services are provided by these legal institutions?

### **United States Laws vs. African Laws**

Compare the United States laws related to Women's and Children's issues to that of your Country of origin – disciplining of children, parental control, husband/wife relations, parent/child relations, marriage problem solving, etc.

### **Politics**

Are African Immigrants involved in U.S.A. politics?  
If yes, what issues concerns them most?  
If no, why do you think African immigrants are not involved in politics?

### **Art, Music and Clubs**

Do you know of any African Musician(s) who lives or had lived in the Bronx? If yes, please tell me/us about him/her  
Are there African-owned music clubs where African music is performed? If yes please tell me/us about it.  
Do you know of African artists who live or had lived in the Bronx? If yes please tell me/us about them, and their artistic work.  
What kind of music Africans in the Bronx listen to?

### **Sports**

Are there all-African sport teams in the Bronx that you know?  
If yes, tell me/us about it  
What kind of sport do African immigrants involved in?  
Do you know of African immigrant athlete(s) who lives or had lived in the Bronx? If yes, tell us about him/her.

### **Business in the Bronx (for business owners)**

I understand that you are running a business in the Bronx. Please tell me/us about it: When is the business established?  
Do you have other partners?  
What is the business about?  
Who uses your services? Or who are your customers?  
Compare running business in the Bronx to that in country of origin.

### **For Church's Leader**

Please tell me/us about your Church: When is the church established?  
What kind of services/programs does the Church provide?

Who attend services at the church?  
How many Priests are working in the Church?  
What language(s) is used during Church service?  
Does the Church have brunches in other cities in the United States or your country of origin?  
Compare your experience of managing and/administering a Church in the Bronx to that in your country of origin.  
What problems are encountered by the church?

**For Mosque's Leader**

Please tell me/us about your Mosque, e.g., when is the mosque established?  
What kind of services/programs does the Mosque provide?  
Who attend services at the Mosque?  
How many Imams are working in the Mosque?  
What language(s) is used during Mosque service?  
Does the Mosque have brunches in other cities in the United States or your country of origin?  
What problems are encountered by the Mosque?  
Compare your experience of managing and/or administering a Mosque in the Bronx to that in your country of origin.

**Note:**

The guide questions are not exhaustive, and are only intended to provide structure to the interview process. Therefore the interviewer is free to ask questions that are deemed necessary during the interview session.

**Appendix 7**

**SAMPLE RELEASE FORM**

**The Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP)  
Department of African and African American Studies  
Fordham University, Dealy Hall Room 641  
441 East Fordham Road  
Bronx, NY 10458**

**Release Form for Research Participants**

This form is to be signed by an individual who desire to participate in the research study of African immigrants in the Bronx. It is our obligation to inform you that the tapes and transcripts of the oral histories will be placed in public archives at the Bronx County Historical Society and Fordham's Walsh Library. The recovered history will also be disseminated to the public through organizing workshops, lectures, media appearances, published books and articles, public exhibition, and documentary films.

Considering the fact that you might have some concerns on issues of privacy and confidentiality related to either, your immigration status or other circumstances, your real name and residential address will not be used in the tapes, transcripts, and in any publication that results from the research findings. Instead a pseudonym or code name will be used. In this way your identity will be kept anonymous and confidential. You have the right to respond or decline to answer any question which you feel would affect you negatively in any way. You also have the right to decline to be videotaped or photographed to protect your identity.

Pseudonym Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 8

### PUBLICITY MATERIAL

#### **REVEALED!!!!!! THE FUTURE OF THE BRONX DEPENDS ON THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS.**

11/27/2009 10:49:00

By Ekow Mensah-Shalders, viewed 1,519 times

**A study by the Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP) of Fordham University, Bronx, NY has revealed that African immigrants in the Bronx are impacting positively the economy of Bronx and the New York state as a whole.**

The research revealed how African immigrants, in their quest to integrate in their new found country, take up challenging jobs and establish businesses in the Bronx, ultimately helping the economy. The Bronx by far has the largest concentration of African immigrants in the whole of the United States of America. By statistics, Ghanaians are the most numerous of these immigrants in the Bronx. *"The Ghanaians work so hard, they drive the cabs, work in the hospitals, Nursing Homes and other institutions and services that support the growth of this nation."* said Dr. Naison, the chief investigator of the project.

He intimated that the African immigrants do all of odd jobs, but they ensure they give their children the best of education, citing an example of one of his student at Fordham University whose parents lived in the Bronx, did odd job but gave her quality education and now works with the Federal Reserve.

The African immigrants are now helping to demystify the Bronx, which hitherto was associated with violence and gangsterism, and other forms of unpleasant happening, which had led to Bronx receiving bad media publicity. *"They are helping shape up the Bronx and I am excited about this. It will go in the history of the Bronx on the role African immigrants, especially Ghanaians, played in that direction."*, said Dr. Naison.

The study of African immigrants in the Bronx under the African immigration research of the BAAHP is partly funded by the Carnegie foundation and is under directorship of Dr Jane Kani Edward. *"The research intends to document and analyze the life history of African immigrant, families, housing, race, relations, pattern of immigration, music, art, sports, religion, political and economic and gender issues among others."*, said Dr. Edward. So far, BAAHP has interviewed prominent Ghanaians resident in the Bronx. Most notable among them is Kontihene, a Ghanaian Hiplife superstar living in the Bronx.

The Bronx has a lot of African immigrant institutions, these include: houses of worship - churches and mosques, African owned markets, restaurants, hair salons, law firms, movie and music stores, boutiques, community organizations and other social, cultural and economic institutions.

It is amazing how the Africans perform when given a conducive platform outside the African continent. What then is our problem back home?

Story by: EKOW MENSAH-SHALDERS

[www.shalders-apotitimati.blogspot.com](http://www.shalders-apotitimati.blogspot.com)

Source: <http://mobile.modernghana.com/mobile/251457/1/revealed-the-future-of-the-bronx-depends-on-the-af.html>

*Friday, August 14, 2009*

### **African Immigration Research Lecture Series Gets Green Light**

Although they are separated by thousands of miles, The Bronx and the African continent have deep ties to each other. Just how tight that bond is will be explored in new lecture series, courtesy of Fordham's Bronx African American History Project.

Thanks to a recently awarded \$11,700 grant from the New York Council for the Humanities, six lectures, which will be open to the public, will be staged during the 2009/2010 academic year.

Jane Kani Edward, Ph.D., Director of African Immigration Research for the Bronx African American History Project and a post-doctoral fellow, tells us that topics to be covered include: African women and Art, African-owned businesses, religion and African immigrant community, African immigrant families and issues of cultural continuity and change, African musicians and music, and Migration and Remittance.

The lectures will be held at the Rose Hill campus, and other venues around the borough, including the Bronx Museum of the Arts and P.S. 140, on Eagle Avenue and 163rd street. Coming as it is after the success of last years' lecture series, "The Bronx is Building: The Bronx as Site of Political Mobilization and Cultural Creativity," we're looking forward to what this series has to offer.

For more information, visit [www.fordham.edu/baahp](http://www.fordham.edu/baahp).

Source: [http://fordhamnotes.blogspot.com/2009\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://fordhamnotes.blogspot.com/2009_08_01_archive.html)

## **Ghanaian Entrepreneur Shares Story of Success at Africa Week 2010**

**By Gina Vergel**



Anna Kwakyewaah Pollard, a Ghanaian born entrepreneur, discussed African-owned businesses in the United States.

**Photo by Gina Vergel**

A Ghanaian-born entrepreneur visiting the Rose Hill campus on March 25 discussed how she found success in America.

Anna Kwakyewaah Pollard, who owns a medical supply firm in San Diego, gave her presentation at the close of Africa Week 2010. The festival included a health fair, film screening, lectures and performances to showcase African culture on campus.

Kwakyewaah Pollard, a nurse who grew up in the African country of Liberia, said she began looking into owning her own business while working at a hospital.

“I always had a passion for helping others, but also saw an opportunity to get into an area that was potentially fruitful,” she said. Today, Kwakyewaah Pollard’s business employs 20 people and has the potential to enter the New York market. But it wasn’t an overnight success story.

“I had to apply for certification, get funding, find a good location, figure out marketing strategies and more,” she said. “Before I got final approval, I had to store supplies in a warehouse for nearly a year. That was tough—having to pay for storage in addition to my mortgage and other bills.”

Kwakyewaah Pollard often speaks at community events for minorities in California on how to run a successful business. She highlighted statistics that put black-owned businesses into perspective:

- In the United States, black-owned businesses make up less than 5 percent of all companies.
- Black-owned businesses are 20 percent more likely to fail within their first four years than white-owned businesses.
- Black-owned businesses tend to start with less capital, and are four times more likely to be denied credit than are white-owned firms.
- In addition, African-Americans are less likely to benefit from the multigenerational family and social ties that often lead to business partnerships among white-owned firms.

“So you can imagine that being African is a huge challenge,” she said. “I remember people asked me why I was opening a business. They said I already had a good job as a nurse. I told them I was doing this so that someday we could do better for ourselves.”

Attitude is important, Kwakyewaah Pollard said. For example, when asked if her accent posed challenges, she said it provides just the opposite.

“My accent is a blessing because when people hear me speak, they ask where I am from,” she said. “Instantly we have an ice breaker.”

Kwakyewaah Pollard, who said she is the sole female owner of a medical supply firm in the San Diego area, offered encouraging words for women in the audience.

“You can do anything,” she said. “Take your time and put all of your effort into it. I’m living proof.”

The theme of Africa Week 2010 was “Culture and Democracy: Using Culture as a Tool to Enhance the Growth of Democracy in Africa.” The Department of African and African-American Studies sponsored the event with the African Cultural Exchange, a student club.

Jane Kani Edward, Ph.D., postdoctoral fellow and director of African immigration research and the Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP), organized the festival with Kojo Ampah, a third-year student at Fordham College of Liberal Studies and the chair of the Africa Week planning committee.

Founded in 1841, Fordham is the Jesuit University of New York, offering exceptional education distinguished by the Jesuit tradition to approximately 14,700 students in its four undergraduate colleges and its six graduate and professional schools. It has residential campuses in the Bronx and Manhattan, a campus in Westchester, the Louis Calder Center Biological Field Station in Armonk, N.Y., and the London Centre at Heythrop College in the United Kingdom.

**03/10**

Source: [http://www.fordham.edu/Campus\\_Resources/eNewsroom/topstories\\_1821.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/Campus_Resources/eNewsroom/topstories_1821.asp)

## **Fordham Launches Africa Week 2010**

By VICTORIA RAU  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

**Published:** Thursday, February 25, 2010

The first of what its sponsors hope to make an annual event to promote Africa, AFRICA WEEK 2010, will feature lectures, traditional African festivities and a fashion show, all centered around a theme of “Culture and Democracy: Using Culture as a Tool to Enhance the Growth of Democracy in Africa.” Members of the African Cultural Exchange in addition to faculty from the Department of African American-Studies previewed what promises to be a week rich in culture and strong in message during its media launch on Feb. 23.

The African Cultural Exchange Club’s emblem of a bird, with the word, “Sankofa,” which means, “going back to our roots to take back our culture,” underscores the week’s goal. Organizers who spoke at the media launch emphasized the importance of being in touch with one’s culture in order to preserve its richness for future generations. “If we don’t do it now, no one will do it for us,” Kojo Ampah, FCRH ’11, president of the African Cultural Exchange said at the media launch.

The week kicks off on March 20, before most students have returned from spring break, when Fordham hosts a health forum with the goal of bringing the African community of New York City to the Rose Hill Campus to raise awareness of health issues facing the African community. A church service will take place in honor of the week on Sunday, March 21. Adama Diop, a United Nations representative, will present the first of the week’s two lectures on March 22, which will focus on Women in Democracy.

New Yorkers will experience a chance to “see what goes down in Africa” on March 23 when Fordham will play host to the Durbar of African Chiefs including Asantehene Chief, Akuapeman chief, Ga Queen Mother, Ugandan chief, Senegalese representatives and others. Clad in traditional African attire, the Durbar chiefs will provide a taste of traditional African culture. An African movie night will follow on March 24, which the sponsors hope will be attended by some African movie stars.

Anna Kwakyewaah Pollard will deliver the second lecture in the week’s lecture series on March 25 on the subject of African-owned businesses. African designers will take center stage in the final day of Africa Week on March 26 with a fashion show highlighting African clothing that will also include hip hop music infused with African drumming in a unique African style. Sponsors of Africa Week 2010 anticipate a busy and exciting week given the significant interest shown by African Cultural Organizations and some African Consulates in New York City. “Fordham is a place where African culture and history is going to be discussed on a regular basis,” Mark Naison, Ph. D., chair of the department of African and African-American Studies, said.

Source: <http://www.theramonline.com/news/fordham-launches-africa-week-2010-1.2170204>



## **African Culture to Be Celebrated This Month at Fordham**

By Gina Vergel

Fordham will host Africa Week from March 22 to 26 on the Rose Hill campus in the Bronx.

The weeklong festival, which will include a health fair, lectures, film screenings, and performances, will showcase African culture on campus. The public is invited. The point is to celebrate Africa,” said Kojo Ampah, a third-year student at Fordham College of Liberal Studies and the chair of the Africa Week planning committee. “It is a must for us to stand up and promote this culture for ourselves and the next generation.

“There is an African proverb: ‘Until the lions find their own historians, the tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.’ We must tell our history.” Jane Kani Edward, Ph.D., post-doctoral fellow and director of African immigration research and the Bronx African American History Project (BAAHP), said the festival aims to “tell a different story about Africans.” “Africans contribute greatly to American society—they run restaurants, stores, churches, mosques and more,” she said. “The main objective of Africa Week is to tell about the contributions they make here and in their homeland.”

The theme of Africa Week 2010 is “Culture and Democracy: Using Culture as a Tool to Enhance the Growth of Democracy in Africa.” The week also will include a performance by the Durbar of African Chiefs, a fashion show and an African Expo featuring African-owned area businesses.

The African Cultural Exchange, a student club, and the Department of African and African-American Studies are sponsoring the event. Mark Naison, Ph.D., professor and chair of the department, said plans are in the works for Africa Week to occur annually. “Since our department was founded in 1969, we have always made the teaching of African history, and the promotion of African culture, a major priority,” Naison said.

“Now, with the founding of the African Cultural Exchange, we have an opportunity to show the entire University community what Africans have contributed to world civilization over the centuries, and what they are now contributing to the economic and cultural vitality of New York City. “Fordham, the only Jesuit University in New York City, is located in the midst of the largest concentration of African immigrants in the nation, so we feel we have a special opportunity—and a special responsibility—to showcase African culture,” Naison said.

Source:

[http://www.fordham.edu/campus\\_resources/enewsroom/inside\\_fordham/march\\_15\\_2010/news/african\\_culture\\_to\\_b\\_74815.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/campus_resources/enewsroom/inside_fordham/march_15_2010/news/african_culture_to_b_74815.asp)

## **Fordham University Set Stage For Biggest African Renaissance In USA**

NEW YORK.....All is set for the biggest African Cultural Festival in the Empire State in March 2010. Living by its Jesuit principles, Fordham University the only Jesuit University in New York and also finding itself in an area which has the largest concentration of African immigrants in the whole of the United States (Bronx) is bringing Africa to the rest of the world in the United States of America, with an annual African week celebration---African Cultural Festival.

The maiden edition is scheduled for March 20 to the 26, 2010 at the Rose Hill Campus Bronx New York. Themed Culture and Democracy---"Using Culture as a tool to enhance the growth of Democracy in Africa." The festival aims to showcase Africa's contribution to world democracy and exposing Africa's diverse culture to the world. The brain behind this enterprise is the African Cultural Exchange (ACE) a vibrant student organization of Fordham University.

"We are very much delighted that this event will assemble the best African brains to look at how best our culture as Africans could be used to accelerate democracy in our continent and expose what we have as a people to the outside folks" Mike Moghi, president of African Cultural Exchange. He stated that so far 90% of the African Embassies and consulates in the United States have given their endorsement of the festival and it's indeed going to be a big success for Africa.

Mr. Moghi was very grateful to the university authorities especially the department of African and African-American studies for collaborating with African Cultural Exchange to host the event.

He added that some people feel Africa as a continent has nothing good to offer apart from wars and stories of genocide and other un-presentable issues. "Let me tell you, we are good people and we have very good things to contribute to world development and our continent", All these issues will be address through a public lecture during the event. The festival will bring to the people first hand information from Africa, by Africans for the whole world. African cultural Exchange is seeking to demystify Africa.

Touching on the festival, the chairman of the Department of African and African -American studies, Professor Mark Naison explained why his department thought it wise to collaborate with A.C.E to host the biggest African Renaissance in the US. "The department established in 1969 have always made the teaching of African History and the promotion of African culture a major priority and with the founding of a student club (African Cultural Exchange) dedicated to those goals, we have an opportunity to transform what we teach in our classes into a major effort to show the entire university community and the rest of the world what Africans have contributed to world civilization over the centuries." He made it clear that currently African immigrants are contributing immensely towards the economic and cultural vitality of New York City.

"We feel we have a very special opportunity and a special responsibility to showcase African culture on our campus and the whole of New York State .This maiden edition, we have invited a cultural troupe from Ghana, the Twereamong cultural troupe will be doing a live performance and Fordham University is looking forward to welcoming thousands of people from all walks of life and around the world to witness the maiden event of this annual festival. The official media launch for the event is on February 22, 2010 at the Flom Auditorium, Rose Hill campus, Fordham University. New York at 2:30 pm.

Source: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/diaspora/artikel.php?ID=176854>

***SATURDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2009***

Fordham University goes Twi

By TOPE TEMPLER OLAIYA

As from next summer, Fordham University, United States, will start teaching Twi at the university's department of African and African-American Studies.

The motivation, according to the chairman of the department, Prof. Mark Naison, is as a result of the growing number of people who transact business in Bronx using Twi as the medium of communication. "It is amazing to see people communicating in Twi, not thousand, but tens of thousands; especially churches, African shops, African Restaurants and food joints."

The private university is taking the lead in this area due to its location and will be the only university in New York to offer Twi. All is set for the Twi class to take-off during the summer section of 2010, with 40 students in class One Mr. Kojo Ampah Sahara, a Ghanaian studying at the RoseHill campus of Fordham University, where the programme will be held and leader of the African Cultural Exchange, an umbrella organization that promotes African culture and values, hinted that a seasoned Ghanaian professor based in Connecticut, Ben Hayford, would handle the course.

Twi, specifically Ashanti Twi, is a language spoken by about 10 million people in Ghana. It is one of the three mutually intelligible dialect of the Akan language; others being Akuapim Twi and Fante, which belong to the Kwa language family. Kwa means a group of African languages in the Niger-Congo group spoken from Cote D 'Ivoire to Nigeria.

The university says it is proud to undertake this enterprise, as it will help teachers, social workers and others, who would be working in the Bronx communities, where Twi is spoken.

Source: <http://theguardianlifemagazine.blogspot.com/2009/11/fordham-university-goes-twi.html>

## **Ramadan Visit by Dr Jane Edward and Dr Mark Naison to Futa Islamic Center**

**Tuesday, September 15, 2009**

Since the funds for our African Immigration Research still appear to be frozen, I wanted to share with you an extraordinary experience Dr Jane Edward, director of our African immigration research, and I had last Tuesday, when we were invited to a break-fast meal at the Futa Islamic Center, the largest mosque in the Bronx, whose members are celebrating Ramadan. Dr Edward and I have developed a partnership with the leaders of this mosque ever since they came to us last May to ask for their help in trying to win back ownership of the building the mosque was located in, at 166<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, which had been seized and auctioned off by the City Department of Finance for failure to pay back taxes. After hearing the story of this extraordinary religious institution, which was founded ten years ago by immigrants from Guinea, Dr Edward and I wrote a letter to the Court of Appeals putting the Futa Center's experience in historic context and arguing that the City government should be supporting, not undermining the efforts of hardworking African immigrants to build a community religious institution, especially given their many contributions to the revitalization of the Bronx communities in which they live ( see attached). When the Court of Appeals, several weeks later, decided to return the building to the Futa Center's ownership, the Center's leaders concluded that our letter had made a major contribution to the favorable Court decision, and honored us, along with the Center's lawyers and a handful of elected officials, at ceremony later that summer

Since that time, the leaders of the Center have been in regular contact with me and Dr Edward and, when Ramadan came, urged us to join them for one of their break- fast meals, which take place after sunset. What makes this particularly remarkable is that the Center's leaders have wholly embraced Dr Edward, an African woman scholar, as an intellectual leader, and assign her a place of honor at ceremonies at the mosque in a way, that few, if any women have been given before.

To understand how moving I found this experience, I would like to describe the circumstance of the break-fast meal last Tuesday, as well as the physical setting in which it occurred. The Futa Islamic Center is located in a two story building that used to be a warehouse in one of the Bronx's poorest neighborhoods. On the ground floor of the mosque is the woman's worship area; on the top floor are offices, a kitchen and the men's worship area. When we arrived at the mosque, at about 6:45 PM, Dr Edward and I were separated, so I went upstairs alone. There, in a space which was probably 80' by 100', I found several hundred men, all of whom appeared to be African, kneeling and placing food and drink on rugs. With the exception of a few high school age boys, all were speaking French or Fulani. I was placed in a chair and urged to watch the prayers which were conducted in Arabic near an altar in the front portion of the room. When the call to prayer was offered, the three hundred plus men and boys in the room who ranged in age from 10 to 70, gathered in front of the altar and chanted and knelt in unison under the Imam's guidance. It was an impressive, even awe inspiring, display of piety and discipline, made all the more impressive by the fact that many of the men assembled were poor immigrants working two and three jobs to support their families. When the prayers ended, the group moved to the area in

the back of the room where food and drinks had been put out and ate and drank with the same unity and comradeship that I had seen during the prayers. Every portion of the evening was incredibly well organized and the respectful manner which everyone dealt with one another left a powerful impression.

After the meal was finished, the imam urged the group to assemble in front of the altar. Two chairs were then put by the Imam's side, as he knelt on the ground, microphone in hand, and I was invited to sit in one of them. Then, one of the leaders of the mosque went down stairs to the women's section and invited Dr Edward up to sit by my side. Dr Edward, who grew up in South Sudan, took her place by my side with a scarf covering her head, which she had brought for the occasion. In front of us, a group of over two hundred men were kneeling, listening anxiously to what the Imam had to say. First in French, then in English, the Imam said that we were professors at Fordham University who had used their knowledge and influence to help a group of poor African immigrants win back control of an institution that they had built with great hardship and sacrifice and that we were a "blessing" to the people of the community, who would be our friends forever. He then handed the microphone over to me and Dr Edward to address the group.

Needless to say, it was an incredibly humbling experience to be honored in this fashion and we tried to return the respect we were given. I told the group assembled that they were a "blessing" to the people of the Bronx, the city and the entire nation, that their hard work, respect for education and strong family values were revitalizing once decayed neighborhoods and that they were winning respect for Islam through their piety and generosity. Dr Edward told the group that by example they were showing, by example that Africans were a people who had built great civilizations and were contributing to the cultural vitality of nations all over the world. When we finished, we both told the group that they were always welcome to visit us at Fordham University and particularly encourage them to bring their children to meet us and sit in on our classes. We also told them we would be coming back to the Center to do an oral history of the Center's founding and of the struggle to regain ownership of its building.

This experience, in my opinion, reflects the unique character of the research project that Dr Edward and I have been undertaking, with the Carnegie Corporation's generous support. We have not only conducted an oral history project encompassing representatives of the many African nations who have come to the Bronx, Francophone as well as Anglophone, we have built partnerships and relations of trust with key community institutions and leaders, especially among the Islamic immigrants who compose a large and growing portion of the Bronx's African communities.

We look forward to continuing this research, and hope we have Carnegie's and Fordham's support in reconvening our research team with full funding.

Sincerely  
Mark Naison  
September 19, 2009

## Appendix 9

Letter to Appellate Court in Support of Futa Islamic Center's Claim to 3400 3rd Avenue Which Was Auctioned Off At Tax Sale By NYC Finance Department

May 12, 2009

Honorable Luis Gonzales  
New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division  
First Department  
27 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY, 10010

Dear Judge Gonzales

I am writing to offer my strong support to the Futa Islamic Center Inc.'s Masjid House of Worship in their efforts to have the tax sale of the building they purchased at 3400 3rd Avenue voided, and the building returned to possession of its rightful owners.

As the founder and principal investigator of the Bronx African American History Project, and a lead scholar on a recent study of African immigration to the Bronx funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, I would like to offer my views on why the New York City Department of Finance's decision to put a building containing a mosque serving an African immigrant population up for auction in the midst of negotiations with the mosque's leaders was extremely bad public policy, as well as of questionable legality.

The Futa Islamic Center is part of an extraordinary demographic revolution in the Bronx that has taken place in the last twenty years. During that time period, the Bronx has emerged as the residential destination of choice for the majority of African Immigrants coming to New York City. Not only does the Bronx have the largest concentration of African immigrants of any borough of New York City, it has the largest concentration of African immigrants of any city in the United States. My colleagues and I estimate that there are now over 100,000 African immigrants living in the Bronx, constituting a hardworking, family oriented population that has transformed the economic, cultural and religious life of Bronx neighborhoods. The first wave of these immigrants came from Anglophone African countries like Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, but the most recent group of migrants have come largely from Francophone countries like Mali, Senegal, Togo and Guinea. This recent group of immigrants contains a large component of Muslims and the Bronx is now the center of at least fifteen different mosques and Islamic Centers, the majority of them having opened in the last ten years

The Futa Islamic Center is one of the most important institutions serving the Bronx's African Immigrant population. Its mosque, located in the heart of the Morrisania neighborhood- which contains thousands of African

immigrants- attracts upwards of one thousand people to Friday prayers. The people in the mosque are a true melting pot of the Bronx's Muslim population, containing people from Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Sierra Leone and Morocco, as well as African Americans and people from Arab countries. The vast majority of the members of the mosque are blue collar workers- cab drivers, security guards, restaurant workers, night cleaners in schools and hospitals. It was their five and ten and twenty dollar contributions that allowed the Futa Islamic Center to purchase the building in which they located their mosque.

Given the importance of this mosque to this important and growing portion of the Bronx's population, and given the importance of making Muslims feel welcomed and protected in our great city and our great country, it is utterly astonishing to me that the City Department of Finance did not negotiate in good faith with the leaders of the Futa Islamic Center in arranging for payment of tax liens on 3400 3rd Avenue. It is one thing to put a building up for auction if its owners default on their taxes; it is another thing entirely to put the building up for auction, without warning, and without following its own Departmental guidelines, while its owners are making payments they negotiated with the Department.

When dealing with a religious organization size and importance of the Futa Islamic Center,, with a population new to our city and our country, agencies of the city government should auction off property owned by such an organization only as a last resort, and after all negotiations are exhausted. What we have instead is a "rush to judgment" on the part of the Department of Finance which imposes incredible hardship and stress on some of New York City's most recent immigrants, people who have made a tremendous contribution to the life of our city.

Judge Gonzales, you have a chance to reverse this terrible decision and return 3400 3rd Avenue to its rightful owners- the hardworking immigrants who through thousands of individual contributions turned an under utilized Bronx building into a center of faith and community. In so doing, you will be making a powerful statement heard around the city, heard around the nation and heard around the world- namely, that people of the Islamic faith are protected to the fullest extent by the laws of our great country, and are welcomed by public officials entrusted with enforcing such laws.

I would be glad to speak on this matter before your court, if you should chose to hear my testimony

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

Dr Mark D Naison

Professor of African American Studies and History  
Chair-Elect, Department of African and African American Studies  
Principal Investigator  
Bronx African American History Project