

# Equipping Tanzanian talent

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**AMINI KAJUNJU** is the first African to serve at the helm of the AAI, the oldest nonprofit organization of its kind in the United States. Previously, she served as executive director at the Workshop in Business Opportunities (WIBO) and as a program manager at the International Executive Service Corps (IESC). She also worked at the Social Science Research Council. She interned at the Carter Presidential Center and the Center for Humanitarian Outreach & Intercultural Exchange. She holds a BA in International Relations from Brigham Young University and a MA in Public Administration from New York University.

“Little by little, a little becomes a lot.” This Tanzanian proverb encapsulates the steady progress that the country has accomplished in the 50 years since the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

After gaining independence, President Julius Nyerere championed the concept of Ujamaa, meaning unity and family. Founded in 1953, the Africa-America Institute (AAI) has been part of a global village that has helped to shape today’s Tanzania. AAI’s core mission is to equip African talent with a world-class advanced education and professional development training to ensure that young people have the skills to compete effectively in a global knowledge-based economy.

AAI has administered undergraduate and post-graduate scholarship programs that have enabled Tanzanians to study at top colleges and universities in the United States, returning home to contribute to their nation’s development. AAI’s scholarship programs – with financial support from the US Government – have included programs such as the African Scholarship Program of American Universities, the African Graduate Fellowship Program, the Advanced Training for Leadership and Skills program, and the Partners in International Education and Training program. In partnership with Goldman Sachs, AAI has managed the *10,000 Women* program at University of Dar es Salaam providing Tanzanian female entrepreneurs with a business and management education, mentoring, networking, and access to capital to grow their small and medium-sized enterprises.

More than 1,200 Tanzanian students have benefited from AAI-administered scholarship programs, professional certificate training, study tours and research grants. For four decades, beginning in 1962, AAI arranged study and lecture tours for 135 Tanzanian visitors through the US State Department’s International Visitors Program that explored critical themes impacting contemporary Africa. The visitor tours yielded friendships and professional relationships that have endured and helped to strengthen relations between the United States and Tanzania.

Indeed, the impact of individuals who participated in our programs is far-reaching. Many pursued careers in fields ranging from finance, business, and agriculture to education, public health, and natural resource management. Today, our outstanding alumni are

continuing to make major contributions in the fields of:

**Higher education:** Agnes Nyomora, lecturer in plant biology, and Mutahyoba Baisi, lecturer in finance, at the University of Dar es Salaam.

**Wildlife conservation and eco-tourism:** Omoury Chambege serves as Senior Lecturer & Acting Head of the Tourism & Planning Department at the College of African Wildlife Management (MWEKA).

**Business and finance:** Louis Accaro is Director of the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation; Reynalda Kaisi is Director of Finance at the Tanzania Institute of Bankers.

**Public health:** Dr. David Kihwele is Director of Programs, while Naomi Bakunzi Katunzi serves as Executive Director of the Family Planning Association of Tanzania (UMATI).

In 2007, the AAI awarded Gideon Kaino Mandesi, Executive Director of the Disabled Organization for Legal Affairs and Social Economic Development, with the AAI Distinguished Alumnus Award for his leadership in the field of law and for dedicating his professional life to defending the rights of Africans with disabilities. In the same year, AAI honoured The United Republic of Tanzania with the 2007 AAI National Achievement Award for the country’s performance in investing in education, improving the status of women, safeguarding the environment, and spurring private sector development, trade, and investment.

During the independence struggle, AAI played a pivotal role in bringing together US and African leaders through the African-American Dialogues conferences.

Tanzania displayed tremendous vision and leadership during Southern Africa’s liberation struggles by opening up its doors to those seeking refuge from oppressive regimes. AAI worked in partnership with UNHCR, the OAU and the Tanzanian government to establish the East African Refugee Program and the Kurasini International Education Center (KIEC), providing secondary schooling for refugees.

Today, AAI is proud to continue its solid partnership with Tanzania. Tanzanian diplomats have recently participated in AAI’s “Speaker Series” panel discussions on expanding access to energy through the US government’s “Power Africa” initiative, and to trade and investment through the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). We hope to build on this relationship for the next 50 years and beyond. **F**