

# AFRO MARKET

AFRICAN - CARIBBEAN - THE BLACK COMMUNITY BUSINESSES & SERVICES

JUNE - JULY - AUGUST 2010 EDITION



KANE MAMADOU

Defending  
the car services

SENATOR BILL PERKINS

MY FAMILY, MY JOB  
AND MY COMMUNITY



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## Immigration march:

where were the Africans?

The immigration law in Arizona to identify, prosecute and deport illegal immigrants, has been seen as a violation of human right all over the 52 states of the US. In New York more than 5000 people marched may 1<sup>st</sup> at City Hall to express their outrage and to prevent this law to take over rest of the US. There were Latinos, Asian, Pakistan, Indian etc.. From this

crowd you could identify only a few Africans people, less than 1%. I was deeply concerned and I really took my time to count them, I was devastated. The african people who were marching were not directly concerned of this law, they are leaders of community who come to support their people but have no problem with the immigration because most of them are legal or are in the process of getting their paper. During weeks, communities leaders have passed the message and distributed flyers in the mosqs, churches, restaurants everywhere African people could gather. The same night of the march there were parties with plenty of African people. Like I said before, we never take ourselves seriously when it comes to meet and discuss about issues to find solutions to our problems. We give more credit to parties. People are always busy looking for money, money that we have been looking for years and we could never make. Sacrificing few hours of our time for our rights it's a big lost for our business. They ignore that our economy, our business depend on our immigration status. If this law is passed ( I wish it will never happen), no taxi driver will be able to work, no stores, hair braiding saloon, restaurant will open , of course people will be scared to go out . That's why it's very important that we take this immigration issue seriously.

I urge all of you to come out numerously for the next time, to stop working that day so that we can boycott this law and pre-

pare our life and the one of our children.

Karim Diabate  
Editor in chief

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## South Africa plans to introduce a US\$60 billion infrastructure program investing in companies that will engage in the growth of the South African economy.

### South Africa Open for Business

South African Consul General in Chicago, His Excellency Yusuf Omar, was in the Twin Cities yesterday to address the Minnesota Business Community and Africans in the Diaspora before attending an award ceremony later in the day. The Chicago Consulate covers the entire Midwest region of the United States. The Global Business Roundtable was hosted by the International Leadership Institute (ILI) at the law office of Igbanugo Partners. Herbert Igbanugo, a Nigerian-American lawyer, and Judge LaJune Lange, president of ILI co-chair the roundtable. The roundtable, an initiative of ILI's continued global outreach, meets monthly with business leaders to "provide a unique opportunity to obtain [global] strategic business information. This month, the meeting focused on maximizing trade and investment in Africa.

Speaking about South Africa's economic growth, Omar established that his country was "Open for Business" encouraging participants to streamline their investment efforts by consolidating shared interests, instead of duplicating ideas, leading to exponential growth in trade. With investment in tourism, among other things, South Africa has an emerging middle class that continues to wield economic power resulting in South Africa reporting its first budget surplus.

South Africa plans to introduce a US\$60 billion infrastructure program investing in companies that will engage in the growth of the South African economy. The construction projects will include the services of 50,000 engineering undergrads as well as American companies that would work in collaboration with local companies for the benefit of all.

On South Africa's challenges, especially violent crime and HIV/AIDS prevalence, Omar assured investors that his government is keenly addressing these issues. Through scientifically approaching crime identifying its root cause, Omar asserts that crime has reduced greatly. A country-wide campaign in fighting HIV/AIDS has resulted in reduced number of new infections.

Omar was pleased to walk into a prestigious law firm run by an African in the United States and highly commended Igbanugo.

"Africa needs to find solutions to economic woes so that the world does not view the continent as a virtual beggar. It is not impossible to collectively change the world's perception of Africa."

During a question and answer session, Igbanugo inquired on the availability of forums initiated by the South Africa to engage the rest of Africa in using that country as a business model. Citing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa's peer review program, Omar noted, "Although organizations have been put in place to facilitate inter-African communications, they are not as effective as they need to be."

Igbanugo who is implementing a business plan to serve as a gateway for US businesses to invest in Africa said, "African countries have tremendous economic potential."

His law firm is currently working on establishing relationships with other law firms in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria in order to expand its services.

Judge LaJune gave an example of how Africa was beginning to change its suspicious view of South Africa through the recent elections held in Nigeria. For the recently ended elections, the South African government printed and flew millions of ballots to Nigeria, but also sent senior South African election officials to assist with the voting process.

Also present at the roundtable was Hyon Kim; president of Minnesota Best Enterprises, Inc. Kim impressed on African leaders South Korea's eagerness to explore opportunities in Africa through its unique method of engineering.

Fred Adiyia, a Ghanaian-American, whose expertise is commercial banking and lending, said his company was coordinating efforts to successfully facilitate the commercial and banking needs of small scale businesses in Africa through the Export-Import Bank (EXIM) in the United States.

The chair of the Kenyan Community in Minnesota (KCM), Joash Maangi, announced a planned African Investment mit in September which would provide a forum for African leaders to showcase to US corporations the economic opportunities available in the continent.

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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP



## JOIN AFRICANS FOR SENATOR BILL PERKINS FUNRAISER

Senator Bill Perkins could not attend the fundraiser he organized on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 at the

National Black Theater. The fundraiser named "Join Africans For Senator Bill Perkins" mobilized hundreds of people. Senator Bill Perkins was in Albany because of his busy agenda but was in touch with his community by phone. It was a back and forth telephone conversation amplified by microphone. Each of the African leaders has been able to talk with the senator. They all showed their support for his commitment to the African community and were proud to have such a senator as Bill Perkins. He was represented by his wife Ms. Pamela Perkins and Cordell Clear Chief of Staff.

**Q: Could you tell us a few words about the mobilization of African people on the day of the fundraiser?**

**A:** I'm very overwhelmed and humbled that the African community came together for an event for Bill, though they have been there supporting him many years since he has been in council. This, to me, was spiritually uplifting and overwhelming and I'm so proud that Bill has been able to get this kind of support from the African community.

**Q: This is the first fundraiser. Can we look forward to more?**

**A:** Absolutely. This is a new phase of the relationship that he has with the African community. And it's growing and growing all the time, so this is just another step. We are very proud.



Cordell Clear talking with Senator Bill Perkins



Mamadou Niang & Imam Konate



Massidi Dione Conde



Aissatou Ndao



Khady Gueye



Kone Mamadou

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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP



**Name: Moussa Kourouma**

**Occupation: President of Mandenko**

**Country: Guinea**

Manding is one of the biggest tribes in West Africa with a population of around forty million people. The people from this tribe are called Mandenko. They are from Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Gambia, Burkina, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, etc. In the United States, this big and strong community has created an association named Mandenko. Afro Market has met with his new president, Moussa Kourouma, to talk about his organization.

**Q: When did you create Mandingo Association and what was the main idea behind it?**

A: Mandenko Association has been created over the last 20 years. Activity stopped because of the lack of dynamism and many other reasons. So this new generation decided to take over the association and create a new bureau with new members. We had an election on April 4, 2010 and I was elected for a four-year mandate to be renewed for the second time.

**Q: You are from Guinea. How do other communities from Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina and other countries respond to the creation of this association?**

A: They reacted positively; we passed around the information in the mosques and met with different associations and people from Mandingue, like Porta Fell Pintal, a Foulani association, Siguiri Association, and Konia Association. We met them at their meeting to explain our project and other places where the communities gather. It's a big ambitious project with forty million Mandenkos in the world. In New York, we estimate to have 500 to 2000 people. There are more than 500 people who connect every night in our telephone conference and 250 to 300 to the radio conference every Thursday and Sunday from 9pm to 11pm. They all expressed their joy of the association's creation.

**Q: Was it a democratic election? How did you organize it?**

A: Yes! it was a democratic election. We had several meetings to inform people, we distributed flyers, and informed our community from radio and newspapers. The election day was at the mosque Luqman in the Bronx. People came from Philadelphia, Connecticut, and New Jersey. The election was presided by the wise man, N'faly Sakho, and with the assistance of Imams Saidou Kake and Diaby. Also, the president of the Guinea community, Amadou Sara Diallo, was present accompanied by Sokoboli. I was a candidate with Sidiki Toure, and I beat him.

**Q: What is the composition of the bureau?**

A: It's composed of 19 members and myself, the president.

**Q: What are the objectives of Mandenko?**

A: We live in this country so we need to be together socially, financially and economically. And we need to give our kids the

proper education and help them with their homework. We have to worry about our lives. If you come for the first time in the U.S., we will help you put you on the right track for your immigration status and education. We have a good and affordable lawyer. N'ko is not only a language but science; we do math, science, history, and geography. So we have teachers to teach our community and our children who need to know their culture.

We also provide health care to our members and if you are not working we can even pay for your rent. In case of a death or one of your parents passing away, we will pay for the burial process.

**Q: Do you have means for your support?**

A: We are having a fundraiser to help our community out because Mandenko has to be able to support itself before we expect help outside.

**Q: What are the priorities of Mandenko?**

A: We want to bring people together and inform them because people need to know what happens in the community.

**Q: The Guinean community is one of the biggest African communities, but they are not organized like Malian and Senegalese. How will Mandenko tackle this process?**

A: This is why we created this association. Imitation is not a crime; we are trying to be more like them and do more. Our website is [www.mandenko.org](http://www.mandenko.org) which has our programs and contacts. We are also having a seminar this June to discuss all of these issues of development on the first sunday in June on 169th street teller and on Findlay we will have a conference. We are inviting the members of the Bronx borough community as well as the police department and our lawyer.

**Q: Last year you had a conflict with the mosque. What was the outcome?**

A: Mandenko is different from the issue of the mosque. But I can tell you the document is in court. The judge is working on it to see the truth and the lies and then we are going to the trial.

**Q: Because Mandeko regroups all of these communities, why don't you take the case from the court and fix it under Mandenko's umbrella?**

A: That is the best idea and it's in the schedule. Imam has called us, but we don't know if those people will be strong enough to withdraw the case and discuss it as family members. People are working on it, but I'm not the person who is in charge of it. If we fix it, I'm going to be very happy about that.

**Q: What is your challenge with Mandenko?**

A: We are going to be successful and we are going to win and be the number one association in the U.S.

**Q: Guinea will be having an election. What is your message for your community?**

A: I invite my community to vote. My hope is for peace and for the best candidate to win.

Contacts: (917) 749-1398

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[www.mandenko.org](http://www.mandenko.org)



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# PEOPLE VOICE



## Francisco Moya District Leader in Queens

I'm here today to stand with my brothers and sisters to denounce what has happened in Arizona. I think we have to come together as a country and talk about the great impact immigrants have on this nation and what makes them so successful. I'm Equadorian with parents who immigrated to this country. This is a wonderful example of what people can do to mobilize and protest what is happening now.



## Luz Santiago District Council 1707 Latino Community

I feel very strong today. If you don't respect the rights of immigrants, you don't respect the rights of anybody because we are all immigrants. What is happening in Arizona is abusive. Today the mobilization is effective. In the beginning, I was worried, but then there was another march and this I believe is excellent. I wish I were taller to see the crowd and the movement



## Sidiqui Wai SPECIAL AFRICAN COMMISSIONER

I tell you, if there is one issue that brings immigrants together, this is it. Our organization, the United African Congress along with African immigrants, Latinos, and African leaderships all want to get together and be involved with this process. We are absolutely grateful and we want to participate on whatever scale to energize and educate. There are people I spoke with who are suffering from injustice and discrimination, so this is something we really care about. It's not just a national dilemma; we have to look at this from a local level as well. The city council cannot re pass legislation they could pass a resolution with they have. There are a lot of good-intentioned leaders like Mayor Bloomberg and NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly, who support immigrants. The last point I want to make is that New York City's law enforcement cannot act as immigration officers. I'm happy to see we are here teaming up together. I pledge the support of the United African Congress and others colleagues in the movement. I will use all of my resources to make sure that we have an immigration law that will enable people to be creatively free, live here and raise their family, and freely make money.



## Eduardo Hidalgo Alliance of Private organization.

We represent the city of Alliance of Private, an organization that wants to integrate Latino Americans with other ethnicities to promote fair immigration. We are human and we are here in America to work, educate our children, and be part of the American system. I'm very satisfied but we can do better. This is just the beginning.




## Yvette

This movement is about our immigration status and we are protesting about what happened in Arizona. It doesn't matter where you are in the 50 states. We have to do something to stop that immigration law.



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# PEOPLE VOICE



## Djounedan Titikpina (Togo) African People Alliance INC

Today's movement is not only for Latinos. We are all involved as humans so we must take action for change. What is going on in this country is not good at all. I have been doing this since 2004 but only few African people show up. Maybe they are scared. More than 50% are undocumented and I am here to support them.



## Angela Fernandez Executor Director of NMCIR]

We are here because we are in a very desperate situation with the immigration law passed in Arizona. It's imperative that immigration reform occurs that respects the civil and human rights of everybody involved. So we are here to demand change.



## Faye Moore

We are the union that represents the professional socio employees in New York. We service immigrants and believe that all people should have the right to come to this country and fulfill their dreams. We believe that immigrant workers should be paid fair wages and allowed to put together their own organizations.



## Frank Stein ( Veteran)

We are supporting labor, and protesting against the war. We want our troops back home. The war effort is taking a huge amount of money away from education and good jobs. We just want to support the labor movement. They have been union busting for years and years. In addition, the country has spent almost 57% of our annual budget on war.





# ENTREPRENEURSHIP



**Name : Bourema Niambele**

**Occupation: Social worker**

**Country : Mali**

For the third time now, Afro Market has met with Niambele Bourema, a social worker volunteering in High Bridge Community Center. This is a follow-up of African council adviser activities. In this interview, he tells us about their projects. Right now he is working in the Census 2010 for the regional office to better serve his community.

**Q: Since the last interview, could you tell us about your counseling activities?**

A: I would like to introduce myself for those who have never read your magazine before. I'm Bourema Niambele, a social worker in High Bridge Community Center and founder of the African Council.

The second Tuesday of every month we have a meeting with the borough president of the Bronx to discuss issues in our community. We began working with Bronx Community College, Fordham University, Monroe College, and Lehman College in the last couple months. Bronx Community College has the greatest population of African immigrant students. In the last two years, there were six hundred students and now there are more than one thousand. We have created a new relationship between the African students in Bronx Community College and the Amadou Diallo foundation. This foundation gives scholarship opportunities to students. Mr. Gene Adam from Bronx Community College had contacted our organization to meet these students so we could explain to them how they can organize themselves. So we have organized two forums. The first was the involvement of African leaderships in this country. The second was how Africans can help out back home. I gave them a lot of ideas on what they can do.

These students help new immigrant students integrate and have funding for their education.

**Q: How is the evolution of your three main projects, Bronx Market, financial aid, cultural event as we've talked before?**

A: First we have a financial committee, which has meetings to identify the number of businesses in the Bronx. They went to the government office to contact a reporter who has all the statistics. Once we have it, we will invite the business people along with the Bronx economic development corporation. During the forum, some specialists will explain how to help new businesses get funds.

Second, for the Bronx Market, we are looking for a convenient and affordable location where we will be able to create many stores that will respond to their needs and the needs of the community.

The third one, which is cultural events, is a work in progress.

**Q: You are working in the Census 2010. What does your job entail?**

A: I have a chance to work with the New York State Senate, Senator Esprada. We explore ways in which African people can participate in the census. We have made some proposals on how the African media can be a part of it, due to the fact that we started late. At the same time, we have organized for our community to take a test so they, too, can have a job in the census. We proposed twenty-five people and seventeen were hired. Each is paid nineteen dollars per hour.

I, myself, work for the regional office of census, which allows me to better understand the system and prepare for the next census so we can avoid the mistakes that we made this year. The African community hasn't been well informed because the newspapers, television and radio haven't had any funding.

**Q: To finish, let's talk about immigration. On the first of May, you took part in the immigration march on Wall Street. What was your motivation?**

A: I think if you look back in history, we are all immigrants, no matter who you are. So denying the status to these people is a violation of their rights. It's the most important issue of our life in America, so we have to organize our communities to fight for their rights. I would like to thank our community leaders who joined us to make it possible, like Imam Konate, Bakary Camara, Sidiqi Wai., Tanja, Adja Rama and many more. And thank you again to Afro Market. Keep up the good work.

Thank you

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**Senator Bill Perkins  
of the 30th Precinct.**

**“We are having a big forum at the end of June to help young entrepreneurs build their business.”**

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, I had an interview with Senator Bill Perkins of the 30th Precinct. While I waited for him, he was busy with some students in his conference room. Finally I was introduced to Senator Perkins. I had a seat in his sumptuous office while he finished up with his visitors and set up some schedules. The atmosphere was great and relaxed and Cordell Clear his Chief of Staff was at his side to make sure everything was going okay. We started the forty-minute interview and Senator Perkins was so captivated by the interview, multiple telephone calls went unanswered. I recognized his sense of civism and appreciated such the engaging interview.

**Q: Senator Bill Perkins, thank you for accepting this interview despite your time.**

A: It is my honor to be interviewed by your magazine.

**Q: First, while I was in the waiting room, I noticed you were busy with some students. What was going on?**

A: One of the joys of this job is the opportunity to talk to young people about government, civic life, ways they can be a part of the process, and showing them what we do. I'm very excited and I love it.

**Q: I guess this is how you started your activism when you were young; you committed yourself for the community.**

A: I was fortunate to have developed a very strong commitment in activism. I grew up during the era of the civil rights movement. People like Dr. King, Malcom X, and Stokely Carmichael were people who advocated for change in the bad conditions of our people. I guess they are my inspiration, the role models that I followed that encouraged me to get my education and contribute to my community as an African. I started my career as a community organizer. I remember when the Senegalese and other African communities started moving to Harlem in the early 1970's. There were only two main businesses that I used to see, and maybe there were more that I didn't know of. The GPC cabs were entrepreneurial and hard working by driving those cars all day and all night. They were the only ones who picked up our people. The other was hair braiders, which were women who did not only braid hair, but cook for those cabs drivers as well. At the time, 116<sup>th</sup> street was abandoned, but African people opened businesses like cars services, hair braiders, and restaurants like Baobab. They were trying to make a living for themselves and for their families back home. They had such a commitment and faith that when Djouma (Friday prayer) came, you could not get a car because those drivers would park and go to prayer. In fact, my office is organizing a business forum with the Malian and Senegalese associations and all other communities to bring them together, through my office, with various agen-

cies to give them information and resources to help their businesses.

**Q: At that time did you see yourself getting into politics?**

A: Maybe I was going to do some advocacy. Frankly, I got involved in organizing my association, the Schomburg Resident Association and other different activities in the community. It was the encouragement from the elders in my community to that pushed me into politics.

**Q: What was your goal when you first came in the office as senator?**

A: I wanted to be different, in the sense of making sure that people felt connected to me. One concern that people often expressed at the time when I first got started was that very often, the elected officials once elected were not as present at they were while running. They felt they no longer had a connection with them and they were no longer accessible. So I made this commitment that they will never say that I'm not accessible. That's why today they see me in the bus, subway, and walking in the streets. As a matter of fact, I even had an opportunity to go to Senegal on an invitation from President Wade. One of the most amazing things about the Senegal community is that they have their counseling general office in Harlem, so it's a beautiful idea; it shows the connection between all of us. I even told the other Africans counseling that they should open up an office in Harlem.

**Q: Since you've been elected what are the changes you have brought in your district?**

A: There are a few things. We tried to make the communities aware of colon cancer, which has a high rate of mortality among men of color mostly because we don't get the proper preventive examinations on a regular basis. So now we have a clinic at 116<sup>th</sup> street called the Medina Clinic. We want the African communities to know that this is the place they will feel more comfortable.

Also, we've passed some legislation related to lead poisoning. We also did a big campaign related to rat infestation and we've even educated people, including African people on how we can do better in terms of how to dispose garbage.

The housing is increasingly unaffordable and we may have to accept the fact that at the moment we are loosing the battle. What we do have in our control is the ability to get programs that create affordable housing. We have had some success. We have programs where even if the building is abandoned, people can take over the building and make it affordable. But the key to success very often depends upon who is mayor. And if you don't have the kind of mayor that is sensitive to our needs, it becomes an uphill battle. So we have Bloomberg, and in the past Giuliani, who are basically in charge of the kind of program that is needed. Their vision is not one that includes us. In fact, we know that in the past they wanted to empty this neighborhood, and rebuild it without us. We fought back on that, like we had to fight back on the Columbia University situation because they wanted to take over our properties in the neighborhood. But if we want to win, we can't have mayors like Bloomberg and Giuliani, in our communities or city.

**Q: A lot of African people want to own their own business while some already do. How does your department help them improve their businesses and assist them with financial aids?**

A: We are having a big forum at the end of June where we are bringing in people in and outside of the government who have



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# DISTINGUISHED GUEST

their business. This will be the first time we are having such an event.

**Q: Vendors are selling illegally in the streets. What do you make of that?**

A: We don't like it. We've met with some vendors in an attempt to be organized so we can better advocate for the licenses and other kinds of opportunities that will protect them and help their businesses grow. This is one of the reasons we are having this meeting. These vendors will be invited to tell their story so we can work together to make them legal and prosperous. They are good people, hard workers, and honest. They are not doing anything morally incorrect, so they should be encouraged to legalize their businesses.

**Q: This is a question from Mamadou Kane who wants to know what you are doing to help fight against the sales taxes?**

A: They come to Albany and we meet with them to get the tax fixed. It's not a burden on them, they will be a part of the conference, they are very important a part of business communities.

**Q: A successful business for African people also depends on their immigration status. What is your stance on that?**

A: We support reform of the immigration law that will make it easier for the community to do business, make a living, and become citizens. In fact, we help organize through some of the demonstrations taking place because we feel that in the past, African communities were not represented in those demonstrations.

**Q: Do you believe that Obama's administration will sign this law?**

A: I believe Obama is an African so he is our brother. He is going to do the right thing.

**Q: Beyond serving your communities, is being senator a prestige for you?**

A: Listen, it's a great honor to represent the communities on any level. In the beginning of my career, when I was president of the Schomburg Residents Association, I thought it was the greatest honor. It was an act of faith to be taking care of their business. So now to be a senator, it's an even greater honor that makes me even more committed to the work on the behalf of people. It's also very humbling because you have influence over people's lives. You have to be very humble and careful because you make very important decisions. You don't want people's lives to be jeopardized and you want people to feel they can talk to you.

**Q: What do people blame you for?**

A: I don't take blame in a negative way. I think they give me information to help me do a better job for them. For example, someone may ask, "Why's that garbage on the floor? Do something", and so on. We encourage people to be vocal about issues and not look at us as if we're untouchable.

**Q: What is the toughest part of this job?**

A: The fact that people like Bloomberg, who have power and an agenda, are not necessarily speaking in our interest. He is so wealthy that he's out of touch with the lower and middle class. The other difficult thing is that very often our own people give up. The great challenge for us is to inspire them to believe that change can happen. Remember that is what Obama said. Why did he say that? Because our people don't

believe, so we have to encourage them to believe. Change isn't going to happen over night but it will happen.

**Q: If you were not a senator, what would you be doing?**

A: I don't know, maybe I'd be a chef (laughs). I would do something in public service.

**Q: So what is your favorite food?**

A: Well! I like Senegalese food and tilapia. I like greens, rice, couscous, sometimes macaroni and cheese but I am careful of cheese. I like to eat healthy food.

**Q: Can you tell us about your family?**

A: My family is from this country, specifically New Yorkers. I grew up with my grandmother and I have a wife, four kids and five grand kids.

**Q: Are your kids going into politics?**

A: I don't know but I hope not (laughs).

**Q: Has your wife been supportive in your election?**

A: Without my wife, I wouldn't be here today.

**Q: Do you have time for your family?**

A: Not enough, they would probably be happier that I'm busy with other things than bothering them (laughs). Sometimes they say, "don't you have a meeting?" "Don't you have something to do?" "When do you going back to Albany?" (laughs)

**Q: What are they complaining for?**

A: They complain about anything.

**Q: What are your daily activities?**

A: I start my day running early in the mornings and then I head to my office around 8:30am. My first meeting is set for 10:00am, but when Africans say 10:00am, that means more like 1:00pm. That's African time! (laughs)

**"I'm running for election, I'm confident that we will win"**

**Q: You are running for re-election. What do you think your chances are of winning?**

A: I'm confident that we will win with the support of the community. We have a strong record of good work and accomplishments within the community so we will result in a victory. We take nothing for granted and we always work hard as if we are new and people don't know us.

**Q: What is your ambition in politics?**

A: I want to do whatever I can to be effective. If they think there is another place I can be effective, I would like to go there. Very often people ask me if I want to join Congress. It would be a wonderful honor to represent the community in Congress with the diversity of international peoples.

**Q: If you had to reward someone in your community, who would he/she could be?**

A: Other than my mother (laughs), I would have to choose a woman from my political club, Sojourner Truth. I named the club after her because the women in the community are the ones who have been doing so much of the work in the community. They have been activists and have been the backbone of our leadership. Thank you for your time.

**Interview made by Karim Diabate**





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“Un toit pour chaque ivoirien de la diaspora”



**Nom: Madame Amy Fomba**  
**Occupation: Promoteur Immobilier**  
**Pays: Côte d'Ivoire**

**EFCA** est une des sociétés immobilières les plus crédibles en Côte D'Ivoire. Sise au Plateau don't l'un d'un objectifs cette année 2010 est de réaliser un toit pour chaque ivoirien des USA. Créée en 1995 et dirigée de mains de maitresse par Amy Fomba la directrice , EFCA la société qui porte son initiale , a réussi à décrocher les plus gros et juteux contrats en Côte d'Ivoire auprès de l'Etat, des ambassades et des privés. Elle a notamment dans son livre d'or des réalisations comme des hôpitaux, écoles, des belles cités et des terrains . EFCA est une agence multi services. En plus de l'immobilier, elle fait aussi le transfert d'argent avec Western Union dont plus d'une vingtaine d'agences implantées à travers le pays. Le tout chapeauté par le financement de la BHCI Banque de l'Habitat en Cote d'Ivoire. Afro Market l'a suivie durant une dizaine de jours pour s'acquies des réalités en visitant ses sites, ses cités et bien d'autres pour porter la vraie information à ses lecteurs .Nous avons rencontré Madame Fomba Fatoumata la directrice de EFCA.

**Q: Bonjour Madame , Pouvez-vous vous présenter et votre agence à nos lecteurs?**

R: Je suis Amy Fomba Directrice de EFCA une agence immobilière et de transfert d'argent créée depuis 1995. J'ai une stagiaire qui vient de faire un rapport, la société est composée de 52 personnes et plus le staff de la sécurité. Une directrice générale, un Directeur financier et administrative, un chef de réseau, un trésorier, un contrôleur, un informaticien et chef comptable et 3 comptables, une assistance de direction, le chef des agences principales, un chargé de mission, une secrétaire comptable et techniciens qui travaillent sur contrat.

**Q: Peut-on savoir votre parcours ?**

R: J'ai commencé par le bâtiment de 1995 à 99. Après le coup d'état on arrivait plus à travailler. On arrivait plus à avoir des marchés, alors il fallait maintenir la société en créant une activité secondaire parallèlement au bâtiment , qui est le transfert d'argent Western Union depuis 2000.

Je suis dans les affaires depuis 25 ans. J'ai commencé agent comptable dans une société. Quand la société a fermé j'ai fait valoir mes devoirs dans une autre société de fabrication de plastiques. Remplacée par la femme du patron de cette société de fabrication de plastiques , J'ai perdu mon emploi de mon retour des congés de maternité. Pendant 6 mois je prenais mon salaire, mais je n'étais pas à l'aise parce que je trouvais cela

## La dynamique équipe de L'EFCA

très facile. J'ai alors ouvert une dizaine de kiosques Lonacie , j'ai pu économiser 5 millions de CFA.

J'ai rencontré Amadou Diallo le fils d'Abdoulaye diallo du temps d'Houphouët, à qui j'ai formulé mes ambitions d'être entrepreneur , il m'a mis en contact avec Mel Théodore qui m'a donné un premier marché. J'ai eu beaucoup de contrats par la suite. Notamment la mairie de Cocody, Treichville, mairie d'Abidjan, d'Abengourou, Agnibelekro, Bondougou. J'ai construit une école à Tiassalé, San Pédro, Soubré , j'ai travaillé avec des ambassades pour ne citer que ceux -là. En ce qui concerne Western Union, nous y sommes pour le prestige. Quand on entend Western Union on croit que vous avez de l'argent, pour faire beaucoup d'argent il faut en avoir au moins 6 agences , nous en avons plusieurs. Quatorze (14) à Abidjan, on en a à Man , Adzope, Bondougou et korogho



**Residence 2000 un véritable chef d'oeuvre réalisé par L'EFCA avec l'appui de la BANQUE.**

**Q: A quoi consiste le système de fonctionnement du travail de EFCA ?**

R: Nous construisons pour les particuliers et pour l'état. Nous sommes entrain d'acheter actuellement un lot à Biabou sur la route d'Alépé. C'est maintenant que nous abordons le côté promotion immobilière avec l'appui de la banque de l'habitat de Côte d'Ivoire qui nous soutient depuis 1997 en nous donnant des lignes de découvert, des crédits. C'est la confiance hein, on a tout fait avec cette banque. Aujourd'hui à cause de la rareté des marchés pour la construction, la BHCI nous aide dans la promotion immobilière qui est la viabilisation, le morcellement , nous faisons ensuite la promotion et la commercial-



isation du terrain. Ceux qui souhaitent acheter les terrains doivent verser à la banque qui définit à son tour les paramètres des prêts immobiliers pour construire. Donc j'invite tout le monde surtout la diaspora à ouvrir un compte à la BHC.I

**Q: En ce qui concerne la diaspora avez-vous entrepris des démarches, pourquoi les Ivoiriens de la diaspora doivent venir vers vous et non pas d'autres agences immobilières.?**

R: En bâtiment, nous offrons un bon service, nous amenons nos clients à la BHCI qui les aide à ouvrir un compte et à leur prêter de l'argent pour construire. Alors je demande aux clients de venir vers nous parce que la banque est notre garantie et notre sécurité, le client sait dès lors qu'il n'a pas à faire à de simples individus. Nous ne touchons pas à l'argent du client, il le dépose directement à la banque et la banque prend contact avec nous pour le travail. Nous serons aux USA très bientôt pour prendre contact avec la diaspora pour mieux les imprégner de la situation.

**Q: Quelles sont les clauses du contrat entre la banque et son client?**

R: La banque demande à son client une garantie. Le client peut faire un DAT à la banque de 2 à 3 millions, la banque peut vous donner 2 à 3 fois ce montant pour pouvoir vous installer.

**Q: Puisqu'il s'agit de la diaspora, combien de clients avez-vous eus et quelles sont leur satisfaction?**

R: il y en a beaucoup je ne peux pas tout citer, mais je peux vous mettre en contact avec une dizaine de clients qui vous parleront de nos services et de leur satisfaction.

**Q: En tant que promoteur immobilier comment réagissez-vous quand les africains de la diaspora se font duper par leur parents ou amis pour la construction d'un toit?**

R: Je voyage à travers le monde et je me rends compte comment les africains de la diaspora souffrent pour faire de l'argent, cela me fait beaucoup pitié. C'est notre raison d'être. Je leur demande d'être sûrs et tranquille qu'avec nous ils frappent à la bonne porte. J'insiste et je persiste, nous ne touchons pas à leur argent, ils vont le déposer de leurs mains propres à la banque.

A partir des USA ils pourront choisir leur terrain sur le site de la banque. D'ailleurs, nous nous préparons pour aller rencontrer la diaspora aux USA.

En ce qui concerne le transfert d'argent, il y a plusieurs voies. Celle qui se fait avec des petites agences et celle avec Western



**EFCA et la Banque de l'Habitat de Cote d'Ivoire au service de la Diaspora Ivoirienne des USA..**

**Madame Amy Fomba(en blanc)( M.Souleymane DOGONI  
Directeur General de la Banque de l'Habitat**



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Union. Je mettrai à votre disposition la liste de mes agences Western Union et je leur demande de passer par nous, c'est plus sûr et garanti.  
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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP



**Name: Kane Mamadou**

**Occupation: President of L.D.B.O.A**

**Country : Mali**

**Kane Mamadou** is the president of African Livery Drivers and the Base Owners Association. He and The Livery Round Table have fought against the shutting down of an African base, which was fined by TLC and the workers' compensation board. In this interview, we tackle three other important issues: the sales tax, the new TLC commissioner, and the effects of workers' compensation.

**Q: Could you tell us how you are fighting against the sales taxes situation?**

A: We went to Albany in March with the industry leaders to meet the twenty-seven senators and discuss the workers' compensation issue. It's financially affecting the base owners and drivers. We have lobbyists, Jackie and Alan, who are doing everything to win on the sales tax. It's an expensive fee for base owners that will create a problem between base owners and drivers, and between drivers and clients. Base owners will raise the base fee and the drivers will have to raise the fare. We are preventing that from happening.

**Q: What are the consequences of the workers' compensation on base owners and drivers?**

A: We have been in Albany more than twenty times for the past four years fighting against workers' compensation, but it's happening. We had a meeting with Governor Patterson and the workers' compensation board. In November, we met in Queens so we could come to the agreement that each base has to pay \$260 for each car every year. The bases that joined before January 1st 2010 will see any lawsuits or hospital bills they may have, dropped. Some base owners thought it was a joke, as if it would not happen. But it did happen. The governor and the legislators signed it. It is the law and for those who didn't join it, their base will be shut down by TLC.

One of the African bases didn't join and they received a notice on May 1st that their base would be closed by May 22nd because they didn't join the workers' compensation board by the deadline. They also had a lawsuit dating back to 1997 and an accident that occurred on January 14, 2010. The 1997 lawsuit was over \$200,000 but they were asked to pay only \$50,000 and the state would pay the rest. Since January 1st they have been charged a \$200,000 fine every ten days for not joining the worker's compensation fund. Therefore, the state has charged them a \$200,000 fine. So altogether the base has been charged \$419,000. If they had joined the worker's compensation, the charge of \$419,000 would have been dropped. So it's obligatory to join the worker's compensation or any other insurance group.



**Kane Mamadou in the office of Avek CEO Caramel Car Service are trying to fix the perception problem.**

**Q: How did you fix the base's problem?**

A: Well, the workers compensation board sent me a letter and I asked them to send it to the base. The base tried to fight it for eleven days, which turned out unsuccessful. Soon after, an official from TLC came with a certified notice to shut down their base on May 22nd. The base owner came to me and from May 11<sup>th</sup> to May 16<sup>th</sup>, I was able to fix the situation. So the livery round table brought it down from \$419,000 to \$107,000. We are also fighting to drop a \$45,000 lawsuit for an accident that happened on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010. If we succeed, they will only have to pay \$62,000. As of now, the base is covered. These bases have to fix their problems because this is what they are assigned to do.

**Q: This is a strong message to all the base owners.**

A: Yes! We want to avoid this kind of situation from happening again. It takes a team to solve this kind of issue, which will cost you five thousand dollars.

**Q: Is it possible to join the workers compensation fund after January 1st 2010?**

A: Yes it is possible, as long as the base doesn't have a problem.

**Q: What happens if the base has a problem?**

A: The base must come see me and my team will work together to fix the issue.

**Q: You met with the new TLC commissioner, David Yashin. In what atmosphere did the meeting happen?**

A: We did meet with him in April and explained our problem. We told him that we want to work in the same direction with him so that everyone could benefit. The meeting was set for half an hour but we went over two hours. Therefore we started a great relationship with the new commissioner. Hopefully soon I will be able to bring him to Harlem and he can meet with the African community. That's my next move.

**Q: How confident do you feel in working with him?**

A: I have great confidence that he will help us because that is one of his duties as commissioner. When we have issues, I am sure that he will be able to help us. I, personally, have a great relationship with Mathew Daus, the former commissioner. So hopefully I can build the same relationship with the new commissioner.

**Thank you**

**Mamadou Kane : 516-425-1358**





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# SMALL BUSINESS



**“Tontine” is one of the best ways to help people build a business.**

Nayan Dioubate is a native from Kankan Guinea. She is a griotte, a storyteller and traditional singer, and she also owns a hair braiding salon in New Jersey. The very successful Nayan Dioubate is a member of many women's associations in New York and New

Jersey.

She is one of the most popular, brilliant, and talented artists in this country's African community. She travels all over the country to host weddings, baby showers, and concerts, sometimes accompanied by her sisters Djefadima and Bebe. She doesn't make that much money but she loves her job and meeting different people.

Using her own money, Nayan has produced two albums. In 1993, her first album titled “Nayan la finesse”(Nayan the thinness) was made in Cote d'Ivoire. The second, “Densoronbalia”(Infertility) was made in 1998 in New York. Nayan is not planning for a third album; she wants to be more in touch with her community. Nayan Dioubate is an active member of two women's associations, Femmes d'Affaires (Business Women) created in 2004, and Lumiere (Light) created in 1985 in the Ivory Coast. Lumiere, led by Fanta Kaba, is represented here in the U.S..

“The objectives of Lumiere and Femme d'Affaires are to help the members of the associations here in the U.S. and help our people back home by providing education health, food, job and much more”, says Nayan

tontine” every month, put money together, and give it to a member who will use it to start her own business. In the past year, Lumiere has sent sewing machines and money. They also built a school where children learn how to tailor.

Recently, Femme d'affaires organized a concert and invited a former minister in

Guinea, Adja Tete Nabe. “Tontine” is one of the best ways to help people build a business. It can take many months to get the money, depending on the number of members in an association but it's worth it. Because of Nayan's credibility, availability and experience, she is solicited by women's associations to be their gold-mother, like “Bebe Jolie” and “15 ans”, all from Guinea.

Nayan is very successful but encounters problems now and then. She says, “in this life, you can't be loved by everybody, but you don't look at that, you try to ignore it keep up the good work”.



**Nayan Dioubate was a special guest**

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# ENTREPRENEUSHIP



**Name :** Cady Wassa Traore  
**Occupation:** Fashion Designer & Consultant  
**Country:** Cote d'Ivoire

Cady Wassa Traore was born in Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire), West Africa. At the age of 19 she was selected by Chris Seydou-top designer of African Clothing in Paris- to

model for his line. Since then Cady Wassa went on to become a runway fashion model in Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States. She is recognized as Cote d'Ivoire's Top Fashion model.

In 1997 the 5'11 feet model, Cady Wassa moved to Los Angeles, California in pursuit of furthering her modeling career, where she signed with the prestigious Modeling Agency, Christian Alexander Models Management in Beverly Hills. She then moved to New York in 2000, where she signed with Identities Models and began a successful career in the Fashion Industry.

Cady Wassa expanded her fashion career from modeling to consulting with Top designers and fashion houses in New York and internationally. She also began serving as stylist consultant to superstars and musicians. Some of the artists she has worked with include 50 Cents, Akon, T-Pain, Nelly, Trey Songz, Omarion, Britney Spears, Foxy Brown, Victoria Beckham, Jennifer Lopez, Celine Dion, Keisha Cole, Queen Latifah and a number of other artists. Cady Wassa's most publicized work as stylist Consultant was during the Oscar Award Ceremony where she dressed Terrence Howard in a Dolce & Gabbana Tuxedo. Cady Wassa has always dreamed of launching her Own Fashion Line, House of Fashion Designs, Production and Marketing to supply hip, affordable and unique products that can be appealing to a broad audience worldwide. She also seeks to work closely with her native country in order to contribute to creating job and expanding opportunities for the African youth.

This vision was realized by launching of the art inspired clothing line known as "Inkslingers". This unique line is fashionable, attractive and has received rave reviews from the fashion industry. This line includes fashion jeans, t-shirts, shoes, jackets, hats, tattooed garments and much more.

At the age of 19, she was selected by Chris Seydou to model his line. Today, the very well-known top model Cady Wassa, and her team, have created a tattoo line for clothing that is spreading all over the world. Afro Market had the honor to meet with her.

**When was the moment you realized you wanted to be a model? Is it when you met Chris Seydou, or when you came to Los Angeles?**

A: I was 17 and 5'11 when I was lucky to meet with Chris Seydou who asked me to model for his line. I took my first steps without knowing anything about the fashion entertainment world, because at the time I was a student who wanted to be a pilot or engineer. So I was confused because I had to choose between my career and the fashion world. From my first big runway show, all the designers including Alpha D., Pathe O., Etienne Marcel, and many more asked me to audition for their lines which led to my travels throughout Africa, Europe, and Asia while participating in fashion show.

**Your label is called Inkslingers. What does it mean and when did you create it?**

A: The idea of putting together a tattoo line came from our inspiration to create something for people who don't have tattoos on their bodies but would wear them on their shoes, hats, jeans, t-shirts, jackets, tattooed garments and much more. I



joined this group of Michael, Kenser and they decided that I should represent them in Africa. So I was chosen because of

my consulting experience with the top fashion houses in the US (Hugo Boss, Dolce Gabbana, Valentino, etc.) It's a world where everybody meets and everybody knows everybody. So our great relationship became a real partnership to create and promote the label, Inkslingers. In French we say "la tache d'encre".





# ENTREPRENEURSHIP



## **African model and designer, how can American people appreciate this idea?**

**A:** They are so impressed, and they ask me how I had this idea! I tell them that I'm a creator and designer and I know what people like. We can create for different people regardless of their age, sex, and color.

## **Q:How are you doing the promotion and where can we find Inkslingers?**

**A:**Inkslingers can be found in the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, and Mali for now as well as in the states at Century 21 and in a few boutiques in SoHo. We closed fashion week in 2008 and 2009 where we showed our new collection. Inkslingers has also been promoted by hip-hop music artists like T-Pain, Britney Spears, Akon and so on. Alpha Blondy, in his last concert here in New York, also promoted Inkslingers and Meiway and all the stars in the Ivory Coast, as well as Kenneth and Spike of Gabon support the line.

## **Q:Can we hope to one day see Michelle Obama dressing in Inkslingers?**

**A:**Of course! Right now this is a youth line. I have been working in the haute couture line Leamono, Albertine's Bongo clothing line made of Raffia. She is the daughter of the former president of Gabon.

## **Q:Do you have your own label for Cady Wassa?**

**A:**Yes, Cady Wassa's brand is in the laboratory. I'm working on it, but I can't tell you when it's going to be launched and what it's going to be.

## **Q:How do you support your business?**

**A:**I came up with a business plan. You can see that it's a huge investment that requires a lot of money. I approached different sponsors and partners. Recently I raised a billboard of Inkslingers in Abidjan and I'm doing the same in Gabon, Guinea, and other countries.

## **Q:Do you also invest in humanitarian organizations?**

**A:**Inkslingers was in Alepe, a town in the Ivory Coast to support children. I always donate but it's not necessary to talk about it. The success of Inkslingers will create jobs in Africa.

## **Q:How do you deal with your busy schedule?**

**A:**Wassa fashion group is a team of hard workers. We try to be organized as much as we can to make things happen.

## **Q:What else would you do if you were not assigned to modeling?**

**A:**I love children. I love to be around them and share with them what I know and what I have.

## **Q:You are still beautiful and elegant. Are you still modeling?**

**A:**My last modeling job was four years ago. People still ask me to walk the runway. But my consulting schedule has become priority.

## **Q:Is there an appropriate age to become a model?**

**A:**I would say no. It's all about how comfortable you are.

## **Q:When you walk down the street, what questions do people ask you?**

**A:**They recognize me and ask for my autograph.

## **Q:Do you like that?**

**A:**No! I really would like to have some privacy. I don't like to attract people's attention to me.

## **Q:Do you like clothes shopping?**

**A:**Yes! Mostly I go in the stores to see what is new in the world of fashion.



## **Q:Do you like cooking?**

**A:**Oh yes! When the time allows me. And all my friends say I'm a good cook.

## **Q:What are your projects for 2010?**

**A:**I'm still working on the project of Inkslingers, Leamono, and the label Cady Wassa.

## **Q:Do you have any difficulties?**

Difficulties are a part of the job and life.

## **Q:What has been your biggest success?**

**A:**I would say in October 2008 during Fashion Week. I was backstage and all of the models were behind me. When Inkslingers came out it was great, colorful, sexy, and I really loved it.

## **Your last words...**

I thank God for all the opportunities and for the strength that He gives me every single day to go through my daily life.

**Cady Wassa Contact:646-320-6966**





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