



ANNUAL REPORT

Covering Activities for the Year 2008

Including Ongoing and Future Projects

Prepared by Friends of Africa International, Inc.

Platform for Change in Africa

The mission of Friends of Africa International Inc. (FAI) is to promote human rights, social justice, democracy and good governance in Africa. It is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization designed to provide research-oriented policy advice, advocacy, training, and resources to regional and international institutions through its multifaceted programs in Africa. FAI activities are designed based on strong and extensive in-country research and study. FAI believes that as far as the role of government in Africa is concerned, designing good policies is important but not enough. Effective, fair and honest implementation of policies is crucial.

Given Africa's abundance of natural resources, human capital and natural plenty, it is hard to reconcile that so many countries and people are condemned to lives of poverty. Policies to attack poverty, unemployment, bad governance, inadequate health services, gender inequality, and other related issues, must not be viewed separately from broader economic and social policies. Therefore, the central mission of FAI is to integrate these broader policies with programs on the ground that make a concrete difference in the quality of people's lives. Thus, while the United States office of FAI is its global headquarters, the organization expends most of its resources on site in Africa.

The Beginnings of FAI

Friends of Africa International (FAI) was founded in September 2005 by Ms. Onyeka Obasi, a public health professional and human rights activist, whose experience working in Africa and internationally has served as a model for the creation of FAI. With a diversity of academic and practical experiences in health, human rights and democracy, Ms. Obasi has contributed towards the realization of human rights and the establishment of true

"I started Friends of Africa International (FAI) in 2005 in part to address the generational gap that exists in policy debates that affect the lives of Africans. African countries are confronted by countless obstacles to development. Governments and civil society organizations toil to combat poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and underemployment, conflicts and displacement, and the HIV/AIDS crisis. The socio-economic problems faced by African nations have deeply rooted historical antecedents, I have found. Nevertheless, young Africans bear the burdens of Africa's underdevelopment, widespread poverty, and health-related crises. Despite their constituting majority of the demographics, they have few opportunities to contribute to dialogue on development alternatives. I strongly believe that young Africans must be part of the development debate. As the continent's future politicians, professionals and community leaders, African youth must be incorporated into such integrated development planning. I strongly believe that good governance is a step towards economic development, they work together. Without good governance and strong democratic institutions, sustainable development cannot be realized."

Onyeka Obasi

Sudan Project



**African Youth Day
2008**

**Pan-African Youth
Leadership Forum II**

**World Bank
Meetings**

**World Youth
Congress**

*FAI
Programs
and
Projects
2008*

Africa Day 2008

**African Youth
Internship Program**

Sudan Project

In an effort to address the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Friends of Africa International designed a three-phased project on the *Capacity Building of Local Human Rights Non-Governmental Organizations, Lawyers and Pro-Democracy Activists from Darfur Region (Western Sudan) on Human Rights and Democracy in Africa*. This project was designed to equip the human rights lawyers and activists, civil society organizations (CSO), and pro-democracy activists with the right tools to effectively approach the issues that face them. The overall goal of the project was to enable civil society groups within Darfur to fully understand and utilize existing human rights platforms in order to effectively engage the major problems and issues facing Darfur. Ultimately, this would allow for sustainable solutions to be obtained within the region through the efforts and endeavors of those people within the region itself.



Sudan Project

The first phase of the project took place in Banjul, The Gambia, in 2006. The first phase hosted about eight participants from civil society groups from El Fasher, Geneina, Nyala and Khartoum. Friends of Africa International, Inc. (FAI) and Darfur Relief and Documentation Center, DRDC conducted training sessions and organized informal briefings with the participants from Sudan and representatives from various human rights groups.

The second phase focused on training civil society groups located within the Darfur region and those working on Darfur issues based outside Darfur. The training took place at the Al-Khatim Adlan Center for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE), Khartoum, on May 8-10, 2008. The 3-day training workshop started with over fifty-five participants from different parts of Sudan including Darfur (Geneina, Nyala & El Fasher), Southern Sudan, Khartoum North, and Nubian communities, representing a wide spectrum of individuals including lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, and civil society groups, including those already trained during the first phase of the project in Banjul, 2006. In its work, FAI seeks to forge a solid ground for cooperation and partnership with local and national associates as well as with international and regional NGOs, governmental and inter-governmental institutions from different parts of the world. Therefore, the immediate beneficiaries of this phase of the project were the over fifty-six participants selected for training. They were educated on the international and regional human rights systems and received training on how to properly and effectively operate within these systems in order to make progress in the region. Additionally, by providing these participants with education and training that they would use to improve the human rights and socio-economic standing of all the people in their region, this project ultimately intends to have many of the people in the region as beneficiaries of its work. The services provided to the program participants was predominantly in the form of education and training, presentations, case studies and discussions.

Sudan Project



The third phase of the project, otherwise referred to as the Monitoring and Evaluation phase, included design of evaluation questionnaires, informal briefing with participants, research and analysis of data, and preparation and compilation of final results concerning monitoring and evaluation. Friends of Africa International visited and interviewed some of the participants that attended one or more phases of the training project. FAI held informal briefings with the NGOs and gave them post workshop questionnaires in addition to the post workshop evaluation that was completed at the end of the training in Khartoum. One of the recurring issues on the evaluation and assessment was the need to engage in training programs and attend the commission sessions to enable them become well informed and acquire more practical experience in the field. Some of the participants indicated that there is need to continue with the training since that was the first time they were exposed to a comprehensive human rights training. The evaluation and review process for the project was important not only for the purposes of reporting to the donors the results of the program, but also as a means of maintaining continued contact in the region to ensure that the training program achieved its goals of sustainable improvements in the areas of human rights, democracy, and socio-economic empowerment.

Pan-African Youth Leadership Forum II



Friends of Africa International hosted the second annual Pan-African Youth Leadership Forum prior to the 11th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union. This year's Forum was held in Cairo, Egypt from 17-20 June 2008. Over 30 youth delegates participated in four days of intensive discussions, debates, and presentations. Youth delegates gathered from nine different countries and heard presentations on issues such as *Millennium Development Goals: Commitment of Youth is Essential* and *Understanding the African Union: Structures, Key Organs & Decision Making Processes*. Participants held group discussions to voice their opinions and concerns regarding challenges facing the continent, such as freedom of movement, the African Youth Charter, and peace and security, particularly in countries that have recently experienced instability. They then formulated an Action Plan and Recommendations, in addition to a Communique which addressed the xenophobic attacks on fellow Africans living in South Africa. The proceedings from this Forum were presented later that week by youth delegates from the Forum at the African Union Summit's 3rd Citizen's Continental Conference in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.



PAYLF II

New Generation of Leaders: Young People Making Change in Africa



Africa Vision Awards 2008



Africa Day has been observed throughout the world since 1963 on May 25th as a way to express solidarity with Africa and its freedom, and to highlight the dynamic cultural and social makeup of the various countries that compose the African continent. It is a day to reflect on the progress that has been made and to plan for the future; to constructively examine issues such as globalization, social justice, and education; and to strengthen partnerships throughout civil society.

The Africa Day Benefit / Africa Vision Awards is an annual event of FAI. This additionally creates a fundraising opportunity for the organization to support its programs throughout Africa.



African Youth Day 2008

On November 3, 2008, Friends of Africa International and the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations facilitated a celebration of African Youth Day 2008. The celebration, entitled *African Youth Promoting African Positive Values*, took place at the AU Mission in New York City, and was composed of a series of presentations and discussions that culminated in the participants' cooperative effort in composing an action plan that offers ideas and suggestions for enhancing the involvement of African youth in their continent's affairs. The celebration was attended by economists, political advisors, activists, civil society organization representatives, youth organization representatives, and students. The event was forum for understanding the past, celebrating the present, and looking forward to the great possibilities for the future. In the end, the young people came up with a recommendation on ways in which African youth in the Diaspora could become involved in the development of Africa. This is in keeping with the recommendations of the African Union Commission and the Second Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers on Youth and Development.

The African Youth Day 2008 event was highlighted by a recognition of two very important facts concerning the engagement of African youth with their continent – how far we have come and how much more we must all do. As one of the presenters stated, "Africa is our own responsibility."

We are the ones we've been waiting for...

Civil Society Policy Forum – World Bank 2008

From **October 9-13 2008**, Friends of Africa International participated in the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund *Civil Society Policy Forum* in Washington, D.C. This forum featured civil society representatives from around the world and influential leaders from the private and government sectors, along with representatives from the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund. The forum enabled these participants to gather together to share ideas, expertise, and experiences from their respective fields of work, and therefore educate each other about some of the most pressing and important issues facing the world today. The forum was not only an exchange place for ideas – it was a platform for dedicated individuals and organizations to develop concrete solutions to real-world problems. The vast diversity of cultures, nationalities, experiences, ideas, and perspectives was combined with a commitment to cooperation – a combination that produced a whole that was much greater and more empowered than the sum of its individual parts.

In addition to participating at the *Civil Society Policy Forum*, Friends of Africa International co-facilitated a series of sessions involving representatives from youth-focused civil society organizations based throughout the world. These participants worked with each other and with World Bank Group representatives to develop an action plan that detailed strategies for increased and effective cooperation between the World Bank Group and youth around the world, so that both groups could further their reach and accomplish their goals. The sessions, entitled *Youth@Annual Meetings 2008: Partners in Development*, were held from October 8-10 at the World Bank Headquarters, and were the first of their kind at the World Bank Group Annual Meetings.

*Civil Society
Policy
Forum*

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*World Bank
2008*



African Youth Internship Program

In keeping with the goal of supporting African youth exhibiting exceptional potential, FAI was pleased to sponsor one of the PAYLF participants in a 2 -month internship with the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), Johannesburg between August and October 2008. She was given an opportunity to work with the following Departments: Research, Publications and Information, in which she was assigned to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) programme; and Balloting & Electoral Services (BES), involved in elections by various organizations, particularly trade unions.

Internship duties included the following:

Research the African Union's role (AU) in the Prevention, Management and Resolution of election-related conflicts, and post-election conflict in various countries in Africa

Research media coverage of elections in Africa, and the role of the media, using Botswana as a case study

Work on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by assisting the Research Department, in facilitating logistics, and planning, for the Third EISA Annual symposium, on the APRM in Maputo, Mozambique, 20th - 21st October, 2008

Work alongside the Manager of Balloting and Electoral Services (BES) with research on the European Union (EU) observer mission's role on the 2002 Sierra Leone general elections

Compile the candidates' nomination list, for the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) election; and be a part of the team that traveled to Polokwane, to conduct the elections

World Youth Congress

At the 2008 4th World Youth Congress in Quebec in August 2008, Friends of Africa was present to introduce and discuss our mission and activities. FAI President Onyeka Obasi talked about the challenges and how the organization has weathered them, as well as the rationale behind the founding of the organization. Ms. Obasi met with United Nations agencies and other international, regional and private donor agencies and discussed the challenges of working as a youth leader in a system where you have survival of the fittest. She also mentored a few up-and-coming youth organizations on how to design development projects in their different countries.

At the same time, FAI organized a workshop on Youth-Led Development in Post-Conflict African Countries. The youth congress brought over 500 youth from around the world, giving them the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the many global issues affecting us, and helping to build their capacity through the workshops, seminars, training sessions and networking sessions.



**African Youth
Internship Program**

African Youth Day

African Renaissance

*FAI
Ongoing
and
Future
Projects*

Sudan Project

**Pan-African Youth
Leadership Forum**



African Youth Internship Program

This internship program is designed to promote knowledge and familiarity of African organizations, institutions and organs for African youths today. The program places Africa's youths in various organs and institutions on the continent which deal with development and decision-making. It is envisioned to be an entry point into these institutions and ultimately provide employment to these young outstanding individuals. FAI hopes to fund at least two internship participants for 2009-2010, with further growth in the future.

Sudan Project

FAI's work in Sudan is of primary importance for our organization, primarily because of the significant peace and security issues facing the country today. In 2009-2010, FAI plans to continue its work in the region by facilitating a program in Sudan entitled *Civic Education on Electoral Probity and Conflict Management for Civil Society Groups, Political Parties Officials, and Electoral Officials/Observers at Local and Regional Levels*. The overall goal of the project is to empower grassroots political leaders, electoral officials and the civil society on principles of responsive electoral and political processes, and basic concepts of democracy and techniques for early conflict management in the political process. Another objective is to facilitate a free and fair election by mobilizing wide civic participation in the elections. Furthermore, FAI hopes to strengthen and promote a more participatory democratic process in Sudan.

African Renaissance

Friends of Africa International would like to host the 2010 International Conference on African Renaissance, bringing young African scholars, civil society, businesses, governments and other great thinkers to Abuja, Nigeria to discuss the need for economic reintegration, democracy and sustainable development and how to re-awaken the African continent in order to reclaim its destiny. This project is still at the preliminary phase.

Pan-African Youth Leadership Forum

This is an ongoing annual program of FAI specifically dedicated to the young people of Africa. This program has trained over eighty young Africans on leadership, governance, human rights and peace and security issues, etc. At the end of each Forum, the youths design achievable action plans and make recommendations to African leaders meeting during the African Union Summit. This is a way of making the voices of Africa's greatest resource (the youth) to be heard in order to include them in development debates. FAI hopes to host the 2010 Pan African Youth Leadership Forum in conjunction with its fifth anniversary.



African Youth Day

FAI uses this day to highlight the significance of the African Youth Charter and how young people could use the document as a resource for project development. The charter is a major milestone of unprecedented importance to the cause of African Youth. There is need to ensure requisite signatures and ensure its ratification and implementation across the continent as an integral part of improving the lives of young Africans. Having this in mind, the charter could be used as a reference document in the formulation of national youth policies across Africa and beyond. The African Youth Charter demonstrates that young Africans have the power to fulfill the UN's Millennium Development Goals and to rejuvenate the entire continent of Africa in the areas of poverty reduction, continent-wide development initiatives, and development alternatives.

Since African Leaders endorsed November 1st as African Youth Day, Friends of Africa International is committed to using the month of November to ensure that the African Youth Charter is promoted, and bridge the gap between African youth in the Diaspora and the youth on the continent. This is an ongoing project of the organization.

FAI Board, Advisors, and Staff

FAI is governed by by-laws and has the following governance and administrative structure: International Advisors, board of directors, regional coordinators from Africa, as well as Interns and Volunteers. The Advisory Board comprises ten international advisors appointed according to their capacities, e.g. law, human rights, gender mainstreaming, education, democracy and governance, electoral reform, grant writing, health, conflict mediation and peace advocacy, etc. They advise the board of directors and team members based on their relevant areas of specialty. The board of directors is responsible for the governance and financial management of the organization. The regional coordinators assist in designing projects in countries within their region based on results from needs assessment. Our committed volunteers and interns are professionals from diverse disciplines and expertise who are willing to assist the organization in accomplishing its set mission and goals.

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

(1929-1968)

Advisory Board

Prof. Patricia Hynes Professor of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health.

Prof. David Weissbrodt Fredrikson and Byron Professor of Law, University of Minnesota.

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo Former Commissioner, South African Human Rights Commission; now Disability Advisor, East Asia and the Pacific Region, The World Bank.

Prof. Stephen P Marks Docteur d'état, Dipl. IHEI, Director, François-Xavier Bagnoud Center, Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health.

Jackie Shapiro Former Chair, NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY (NGOCSW, New York) and First Vice President, Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative relationship with the United Nations.

Jed Weiner Associate, Simpson Thacher Bartlett LLP, Citypoint, London.

Mary-Ann Stephenson Consultant and trainer in gender leadership and decision-making, Italy and U.K.

Elaine R. Wolfensohn Trustee, Wolfensohn Family Foundation, New York.

Board of Directors

Onyeka Obasi Founder/President, Friends of Africa International Inc., New York.

Tyler Steim Former Information Officer for the AIDS Committee of Toronto; Canadian freelance journalist.

Chidinma Obasi Pharmacist, Walgreens, Baltimore, Maryland.

Prof. Ali A. Mazrui Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities; Director, Institute of Global Cultural Studies; Professor of Political Science, African Studies and Philosophy, Interpretation and Culture, Binghamton University, State University of New York.

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Staff

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Katie Moore Program Research.

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Chinyere Osuala Intern.

Funmi Makinwa Intern.

Financial Information

Friends of Africa International, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Copies of our IRS Form 990 for the years 2006 and 2007 are available upon request. Our Annual Reports are available in print or online on our website.

*Note: At the time of this publication, our 2008 financial statements have yet to be completed. Please contact us or visit our website in the summer of 2009 to obtain completed financial statements for the year 2008. Financial statements for 2006 and 2007 are available upon request, and are included in the 2006 and 2007 Annual Report located on our website.

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