

DIASPORAS IN DEVELOPMENT

October 12, 2016

Session Title: DEV Talks: Short Format Presentations Highlighting Successful Diaspora Practitioners and Programs

Presenters: Roy Okupe, YounEek Studios
Ola Ojewumi, Project Ascend
Laila Alawa, the Tempest
Ryan Letada, Next Day Better
John Holm, CAF America
Tseday Alehegn, Tadias Magazine
Earnest Wyatt, Batswadi

Session Summary:

Each presenter shared their motivation and process in creating a unique approach to international development:

- Okupe – bringing African superheroes to graphic novels and to the screen, showing that kids can make their dreams come true.
- Ojewumi – championing the rights of disabled and minority groups in the United States and in Africa.
- Alawa – building a community of multicultural communications to empower millennial minority women.
- Letada – empowering diaspora communities through developing their representation in the narrative on development.
- Holm – working with the diaspora and public/private organizations to promote innovative, sustainable impacts and investment in social issues.
- Alehegn – building a community and fostering information sharing for people facing the same issues and the Ethiopian-American community at large.
- Wyatt – leveraging the research and technological capabilities in the United States to help people in Africa get the health care they need.

Key Themes:

- **Theme 1:** Small organizations like ours need support from organizations like USAID – not only financial support but also information. We need to know how small groups can maneuver the requirements and definitions USAID puts forth and how the system works. USAID can also help us by sharing information on how to harness resources within the United States (not just abroad) and best practices for entering the market.

- **Theme 2:** The groups represented in the DevTalks panel are focused mainly on growing their organizations and building their basis of support. They are trying to make a global impact and to harness the resources within diaspora communities to meet the needs of developing populations.