



African Advocate

Voice of African Immigrants & Refugees In Illinois



NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED AFRICAN ORGANIZATION (UAO)



October/2011

Issue 1

Welcome to the first issue of our e-newsletter - African Advocate! The original *African Advocate* newspaper was a free bi-monthly community paper, predicated on the need to raise public awareness about the state of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. This newsletter serves a more humble role. While its focus remains centered on issues relevant to African immigrants and refugees in Illinois, we devote most of our time here to keeping you abreast of UAO's programs and services, as well as news and events in the African community.



UAO: A brief history

Founded in Chicago in 2005, the United African Organization (UAO) is a dynamic coalition of African community-based organizations which promotes social and economic justice, civic participation, and empowerment of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. It concentrates on four program areas: grassroots organizing and leadership development, public policy advocacy, community resource clearinghouse, as well as research and public education.

The UAO fills an important gap in Chicago's landscape of community- and advocacy-based groups by providing a strong, cohesive African engagement in efforts to give voice to the social justice aspirations of diverse immigrant and refugee communities in Illinois. Rooted in the spirit of collective African commitment to unity of purpose and shared vision, the UAO is the legitimate representative voice of the estimated 100,000 African immigrants and refugees that now call Illinois home.

Since 2005, the UAO has steadily strengthened its capacity to serve the rapidly growing African community in Illinois on a number of levels. It has conducted ground-breaking research, including a comprehensive needs assessment and demographic study of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois. Such research has allowed the UAO to direct its services to where they are needed most. As the information and resource clearinghouse of the African



In This Issue

[UAO: A history](#)

[Leadership Development](#)

[African Voices Podcast](#)

[UAO and Hairbraiders](#)

[JahGhana and UIC students support UAO](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

THE MISSION

The United African Organization is a dynamic coalition of African national associations that promotes social and economic justice, civic participation, and empowerment of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois.

community, the UAO seeks to minimize language and other cultural barriers that immigrants and refugees face, by smoothing the path of access to resources and services. In addition to our community organizing and leadership development programs, we offer a number of direct services:

- Family Support Services: Access to public benefits like WIC, Food Stamps and medical assistance
- Citizenship Program
- Immigration Services
- Employment Services
- Health Education
- Youth Services
- Housing Services
- African Business Round-table
- Free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes

Each year, the UAO holds the Chicago Summit on African Immigrants and Refugees, a forum for policy issues and advocacy. It is also in the thick of a number of public education initiatives this year, including the Africans in Chicago Oral History Project and the African Voices Podcast and Radio show.

We thank the Woods Fund of Chicago, Crossroads Fund, The Chicago Community Trust, Wieboldt Foundation, BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, individual donors, and several valued allies for their consistent support.

At a time when the economy is under strain and funding sources are drying up, we count on our friends to support the growing work of the United African Organization. We need your support to continue our work in the state of Illinois as an example to African immigrants and refugees everywhere in the United States. Please contact us at  (312) 949 9980  or visit our website www.uniteafricans.org to show your support.

Leadership Development Program

The UAO's Leadership Development Program equips community leaders with critical skills and capacities to become effective advocates in their communities.

The UAO held its 2nd Leadership Workshop on October 15th. Leaders from various African community organizations came together to engage with the idea

that *community organizing is a tool for social change*. The workshop was facilitated by Oscar Chacón, Executive Director of the National Alliance of Latin American & Caribbean Communities (NALACC).



Claudia Lucero, Alie Kabba & Oscar Charon at the UAO's October Leadership Workshop

OUR GOALS

- Build the leadership and organizational capacity of the community
- Advance public policies to increase opportunities and support for immigrant and refugee integration
- Ensure that African immigrant and refugees have an active role in multiple civic arenas
- Promote community development and access to social services
- Serve as a viable model of African Unity and Empowerment

Follow us:    

Listen to our Podcast:



Register:

Leadership
Development Program

Join Our Mailing List!

UPCOMING EVENTS

FILM SCREENING: 'Forerunners'

Last chance to see South African documentary
TONIGHT! Award-winning documentary about South Africa's emerging black middle-class. Screened by UAO:

The next leadership workshop focuses on **Strengthening Organizational Capacity**. It takes place on **Saturday, November 19th, 2011** from 9:00am - 1:00pm at 10 West 35th Street, 6th floor, Chicago, IL 60616.

To register for this FREE workshop, email training@uniteafricans.org

OR call us on  (312) 949 9980  . [View Leadership Schedule](#).

African Voices Podcast

In October the UAO launched the African Voices Podcast, an online radio show. The show features **news, events and issues** from the African community in Illinois, as well as **advice on immigration services**. It also includes **interviews and oral histories** from Africans in Chicago, and **music** from African artists. The purpose of African Voices is three-fold:





Listen now to the African Voices Podcast online! You can also download the podcast as an mp3 file. Or tune into our partner, [Legend Radio](#) - Call: 1-832-280-017

- Offer a platform for members of the community to publicize their work, events and issues.
- Provide an information channel for advice on critical issues - from leadership workshops to citizenship seminars and instruction on how to obtain health-care benefits.
- Engage in public education by enlightening our listeners with the histories and music of people in our community, in Africa, and the African diaspora.

Let's work towards the goal of an African community radio station in Chicago. **HAVE YOUR VOICES HEARD!** Send us news, events, issues, music from your community. Suggest someone to interview.

Email: podcasts@uniteafricans.org OR call:

 (312) 949 9980  .

NEWS ROUND-UP

UAO and Hairbraiders in the news

Date: Monday, Oct 31, 2011
Time: 5:30pm for 6
Venue: Bronzeville Room, 6th Floor, 10 West 35th Street (IIT Tower Building), Chicago IL 60616

Attendance is FREE. [RSVP to reserve a place](#).

SOMALIA FUNDRAISER:
"Renaissance for Somalia"
Fashion-Show Fundrasier

Date: Saturday, Nov 19, 2011
Time: 3pm-5pm
Venue: Esther Smith Hall, New Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 1252 S. Wolcott Avenue, Chicago IL 60608

Tickets are \$30 (your donation is tax deductible)

To purchase more tickets, or for more information, call UAO on  312 949 9980  or email services@uniteafricans.org. You can also call the East African Community Center on:  773 681 0801 

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Next Leadership workshop:

Date: Saturday, Nov 19, 2011
Time: 9:00am-1:00pm
Venue: 10 West 35th Street, 6th floor, Chicago, IL 60616
Topic: Strengthening Organizational Capacity

To register for this FREE workshop, email: training@uniteafricans.org or call  (312) 949 9980 

NEWS ROUND-UP

UAO and Hairbraiders in the news



UAO Director, Alie Kabba, flanked by hair braiders Amazon Smiley, left, and Frances Simmons, right. (Photo courtesy of Keri Wiginton, Chicago Tribune / October 4, 2011)

[The Chicago Tribune](#) in October featured an article on the new law that provides a special category of licenses for hair braiders. The new licenses mean that hair braiders no longer have to go through a long and expensive process in order to practice their craft as professionals. The law took effect in September and will require a hair braider entering the field to have 300 hours of classroom and practical experience to get a license from the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. The department intends to offer schools and classes for hair braiders. The United African Organization and the Illinois Association of Hair Braiders were at the forefront of pushing for the new legislation. "We saw this as a social justice issue," said UAO Director, Alie Kabba.

JahGhana and UIC students support UAO



Members of JahGhana and the UIC Student Council presenting the check to UAO staff Alie Kabba and Nancy Asirifi-Otchere on Saturday, October 15th, 2011.

Entertainment Group [JahGhana](#) teamed up with the UIC (University of Illinois in Chicago) Student Council to raise funds for the United African Organization this month! They hosted their annual [Afro Entertainment Awards](#) show on October 8th, 2011. Some of the funds raised from the event were donated to the UAO. This is community support at its best! Thanks to JahGhana and UIC Student Council for their incredible contribution!

CITIZENSHIP WORKSHOPS



Next workshop:

Date: Saturday, Nov 5, 2011

Time: 9:00 am - 12:00pm

Venue: Indo American Center,
6328 N. California Avenue,
Chicago, IL 60659

To register or for more information, contact Cheikh Diop:

 (312) 949 9980 

or email:



cheikh.diop@uniteafricans.org

Empowering Voices talks to Alie Kabba, UAO about immigration issues

Trinity United Church of Christ featured United African Organization Director, Alie Kabba, on their program Empowering Voices. Alie was interviewed by Rev. Joan R. Harrell. He spoke about the work of the UAO, immigration policy, African immigrants to the US and the contributions of immigrants to US society. He also spoke about the need to recognize systemic injustices in our society and to empower people in our communities.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)

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