



African Balkan Institute

# FOSTERING COLLABORATIONS FOR SOCIAL & BUSINESS INNOVATION

INNOVATION DRIVEN BY CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION

[info@africanbalkan.com](mailto:info@africanbalkan.com)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>03</b>
• <b>Vision</b>	
• <b>Mission</b>	
• <b>Core Values</b>	
<b>Strategic Themes</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Current Projects</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Activities and Involvements</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>The Team</b>	<b>10</b>
• <b>Management Team</b>	
• <b>Mentors</b>	
<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>12</b>

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Africa as a continental region and the Balkan Peninsula as a sub-continental region of Europe both share aspirations that make their collaborations imperative for a better world. Our mission is to deepen this collaboration.**

The African Balkan Institute was established in the Republic of Serbia as a Non-Profit Organization with APR Identity number 28380224. Our goal is to promote collaboration and cooperation between Africa and the Balkan region. We seek to promote cross-cultural collaboration in scientific and professional research to drive business and social innovations that can positively impact socio-economic development in both regions. The world is fast racing into a new cutting-edge era of technology with the rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence, automation and various emerging technologies that are reshaping industries and societies globally. We believe that when we remove cultural barriers, we can create room for seamless diffusion of ideas and innovations between Africa and the Balkan countries. This will drive an outcome that will enhance the contributions of both regions to global developments while potentially elevating them to prominent roles in shaping sustainable developments in our modern world.

**"When nations work together, we unlock the potential for a brighter and more prosperous future for all." - Kofi Annan**

# INTRODUCTION

## VISION

**AFBI'S VISION IS TO BE THE CATALYST FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIAL INNOVATION BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND BALKAN COUNTRIES**

We see ourselves as being the driving force for ground breaking research that will enhance socio-economic progress and accelerate African and Balkan regions into a high-tech future.

## MISSION

**TO DRIVE INNOVATION THROUGH CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION.**

We seek to constantly expand the frontiers of knowledge by investing in cutting-edge research with measurable socio-economic impact. At the same time, we contribute to public enlightenment by committing to dissemination of new knowledge and developments that is shaping a modern world. In doing this, we aim to professionally facilitate academic and cultural exchange that contribute positively to harmonious relationship between Africa countries and the Balkan countries thereby serving as a catalyst for global harmony.

## CORE VALUES

**Critical Thinking, Diversity, Teamwork**

Our establishment is premised on the future. We took a gaze into the future and we are shaping our works to position Africa and Balkan as drivers of our vision for progressive and sustainable future. We understand that young people have prominent roles to play in shaping this future. This is why youth development is a core part of our mandate. We fulfil this mission by providing culturally and academically enriching programs for young people with the goal of equipping them with the right technical resources and preparing them for leadership

# STRATEGIC THEMES

## THEME ONE: LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

AFBi is a non-profit organization that aims to attain sustainability by promoting its mission to institutions and civil societies that are committed to positive community impact

- **Goal 1** Developing cross-cultural programs and exhibitions
- **Goal 2** Fostering Key Partnership with local and international organizations within both regions to share resources and expertise for greater impact
- **Goal 3** Aligning our activities with UN SDG goals
- **Goal 4** Developing a framework to assess and report the impact of our programs and initiatives

**Projected Outcome:** Establish AFBi as a reliable partner in developmental initiatives

## THEME TWO: CULTURAL DIVERSITY

IN FULFILLING OUR MISSION TO INSPIRE INNOVATION THROUGH RESEARCH, WE AIM TO FOSTER CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE, ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND BUILD A STRONG COMMUNITY OF YOUNG SCHOLARS ENRICHED WITH THE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES OF BOTH REGIONS.

Cross cultural exchange sits at the core of our mandate

### **Goal 1** Enabling Research across the two regions

- Establish AFBi research across the two regions
- Develop programs to help start-ups in both regions collaborate and connect with global opportunities
- Establish a framework for research collaboration between academics in both regions
- Establish cross peer mentorship programs for young researchers in both regions

### **Goal 2** Prioritizing Academic and Cultural Exchange

- Establish frameworks for academic exchange programs between the two regions
- Facilitate travels between the two regions for business, tourism and academic activities
- Organize language and cultural immersion programs that intercept the two regions
- Host periodic festivals showcasing music, dance, art, culture, literature and cuisine from both regions
- Provide platforms for artists from both regions to collaborate on projects blending their cultural expressions.

**Projected Outcome:** Establish AFBi as the go-to entity for cultural fusion between Africa and the Balkan region

## THEME THREE:

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

BY EXPLORING THE CREATIVE SECTOR, AFBi AIM TO FACILITATE TRADE BETWEEN AFRICAN CONTINENT AND THE BALKAN REGION.

**Goal 1** Establishing AFBi social and innovation Hub to help innovators from both regions to connect and interact

- Support diffusion of innovation and ideas between the two regions of shared progress
- Facilitate training and educational programs for start-ups in both regions
- Facilitate collaboration between innovators in both regions
- Facilitate trade and business exchange between the two regions by providing technical resources for interest groups

**Goal 2** Providing consulting services in market research (data analysis and risk assessment) to help businesses whose activities intercept both regions

**Projected Outcome:** Establish AFBi as the major driver of innovation that cuts across the two regions

## THEME FOUR:

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IS AT THE CORE OF AFBi'S MISSION. WE INTEND TO FULFIL THIS MISSION BY PROMOTING VARIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR YOUTHS IN THE TWO REGIONS AND ENCOURAGING A COLLABORATION THAT WILL STRENGTHEN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TIE BETWEEN COUNTRIES OF BOTH REGIONS

**Goal 1** Establish African Balkan Resource Center for Youth to promotes knowledge sharing

**Goal 2** Encouraging academic and cultural exchange between young people from both regions

**Goal 3** Organizing guided tours for Africans visiting the Balkan region as well as for Balkan visitors exploring Africa

**Goal 5** Develop short certificate courses in development programs for youths

**Projected Outcome:** Establish AFBi as the go-to entity for young people looking for the network, resources and supports to realize their ambitions and potentials

# CURRENT PROJECTS

## **MoU with between Masakhane and the Serbian Artificial Intelligence Community**

We are currently working towards facilitating research collaboration between Masakhane ([www.masakhane.io](http://www.masakhane.io)) and the Serbian AI society. Masakhane is an African indigenous grassroot AI research Community with a mission to ensure that African languages are well represented in technologies. The goal is to facilitate regular interactions between Serbian AI researchers and African AI researchers to foster collaborations aimed at addressing language bias in state-of-the-art technologies. We aim to use this platform to improve the exiting models of machine translation between Slavic language and African languages and we have identified professors in Serbia and professors in Africa who are willing to mentor this project.

# ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENTS



At the Afrobeat Symposium organized by AFBi in Novi Sad on October 2023.



AFBi represented at the 13th Intl conference on Information society and Technology in Kopaonic as well the 3rd Intl conference on Applied Artificial Intelligence in Kragujevac



AFBi represented at the 2024 Serbian national day celebration in Abuja



AFBi receiving award for community impact at an international event in Belgrade



At an outreach program in Liberia on #GirlsWithPeriod initiative

# MEET OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Meet the individuals driving the wheels of our organization's progress. Our management team comprises of young people from both Africa and the Balkan region who have committed to push the ambitions of AFBi.

## **Adedotun Olasunkanmi Ogundare**

Program Coordinator--Serbia and Slovenia

is a tech practitioner and a researcher, currently juggling his practice and academic life. He earned a Bsc. in Telecommunications and Wireless at the American University of Nigeria before proceeding to Corvinus University of Budapest to pursue an MBA. He is also an alumnus of University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business (SEB). In addition, he completed an Msc. in Software Engineering from the Univerzitet U Novom Sadu where he is currently doing his PhD research. He has consulted both in private and public sectors in Europe and Nigeria.



## **Mayowa Shitta**

Director of Projects

received a BSc in Mass Communication from Alhikmah University in 2016 and a professional degree in Digital Marketing and UI/UX from FlipTotech in 2022. She is the Co-founder of Sapphire Events and Project Management and has been recognized for her attention to detail and innovative project leadership strategies. Additionally, she freelances as an HR consultant for tech startups in Nigeria. Mayowa's dedication extends beyond event planning and project management. She actively participates in the "Caring for Girls with Period Initiative," a non-governmental organization aiming to eliminate period poverty in Africa.



## **Kristina Savić**

Sustainability Manager

completed a BSc in Forestry Engineering at the University of Belgrade and a master's degree in Forestry Engineering, specializing in Environmental Engineering with a focus on the protection of land and water. During her master's program, she studied in Poland under the Erasmus+ program. Kristina is known for her expertise in team building and cross-cultural engagements, consistently demonstrating an energetic and innovative forward-thinking approach throughout her academic and professional career. She is fluent in German, English, and Polish.



## **Sheriffdeen Abdulkareem**

Technical Director

obtained a BSc in Mass Communication from Alhikmah University in 2018. He also pursued studies in International and Comparative Politics at the American University of Nigeria. Sheriffdeen is the Co-founder of Dinagro Nigeria Limited, he is into Agriculture, Project Management and Entrepreneurship. He is Committed to excellence and driving impactful initiatives forward and very passionate about youth empowerment, good governance and food security.



# MEET OUR MENTORS

Our management team is mentored by members of the AFBi Advisory Board—which are accomplished individuals committed to driving the success of the organization. The advisory board meets periodically with the management team to discuss progress toward our vision.



## Dr. Temitope Gold Olaoye

holds board certifications in Physiology Education and Clinical Physiotherapy. A healthcare practitioner with a passion for business and innovation, he is a member of prestigious organizations including the Africa CEO Round Table Forum, Nigeria Association of Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Miles and Agriculture (NACCIMA) and the American Society of Clinical Physiotherapy. He is a consultant physiotherapist in Nigeria. He was the Medical Unit Head for the 2003 All-African Games and a key member of the Local Organizing Committee for the Olympics Games, as well as a Medical Consultant for the Nigeria Institute of Sports. Dr. Olaoye received an award from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2016 for his contributions to innovative farming in Africa. He is the President and Chairman in Council of the Nigerian Belgrade Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NBSCC)



## Mr. Predrag Ivkovic

is the founder and General Manager of EPRO Electronic d.o.o., a company specializing in innovative power electronics, established in 1988 in Belgrade, Serbia. Under his leadership, EPRO has developed cutting-edge electronic products and transformed its business to an international level. He previously served as a Hardware Design Engineer at Mihajlo Pupin Zvezdara Institute, where he contributed to significant industrial electronics projects. He earned a degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the University of Belgrade and is certified in project management by the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce. Predrag's expertise includes electronics, project management, strategic planning, and energy management. He is proficient in Serbian, Croatian, and Macedonian. Predrag is also a patent holder.



## Prof. Rachid Yazami

is a Moroccan scientist and engineer best known for developing the graphite anode for lithium-ion batteries. He earned his PhD from the Grenoble Institute of Technology and has served as a research director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). Additionally, he has been a visiting professor at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). Yazami's groundbreaking work has resulted in nearly 180 patents and multiple startups. His contributions to battery technology include pioneering the reversible intercalation of lithium into graphite, which revolutionized battery efficiency and safety. Despite his pivotal role in lithium-ion battery development, Yazami was glaringly omitted from the 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, stirring reactions in the research community as the award honored his co-authors. Yazami has received numerous accolades, including the IEEE Medal for Environmental and Safety Technologies and the Draper Prize. In 2022, he was appointed a visiting scholar in chemistry at Caltech.



## Prof. Foluso Olutoyin Okebukola

is a distinguished academic in Language Education, currently a Professor at Lagos State University. Her expertise spans language acquisition, pedagogy, and curriculum development, emphasizing innovative teaching methods and technology integration. She mentors students, fosters inclusive learning environments, and contributes to national curriculum development. Prof. Okebukola actively participates in professional organizations, conferences, and consultancy projects, impacting educational policy and program development. Her dedication has solidified her reputation as a leader in Language Education, shaping its future through research, teaching, and leadership.



# CONNECT WITH US

Афричко Балкански Институт



+2348094000217



+381511806187



info@africanbalkan.com



5a Bulevar Stefana Despota, Novi Sad, Serbia