

Heritage Reconnection Alliance:

Lost Africans in the Asia Pacific



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Welcome to the Heritage Reconnection Alliance!

🚩 Rediscovering Identity

🚩 Reconnecting Heritage

🚩 Empowering Communities



African Siddi girl from the town of Yellapur in Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka, India.

About Us

The Heritage Reconnection Alliance is a groundbreaking organization dedicated to rediscovering and reconnecting the "Lost Africans" in the Asia Pacific region with their African heritage and the African Union. We are committed to reclaiming lost narratives, empowering communities, and fostering cultural connections within the global African Diaspora.



Nawab Ibrahim Mohammad Yakut Khan II of Sachin (1833–1873) was an African ruler from the Siddi dynasty. The Siddi dynasty has its origins in the Habesha community, which is culturally and ancestrally connected to the ethnic groups in the Ethiopian highlands of Africa. The African rulers, like Nawab Ibrahim Mohammad Yakut Khan II, governed Indian states such as Sachin, which had their own currency, cavalry, and stamped paper, along with a state band.

Our Objectives:

- **Research and Discovery:** Uncover the hidden histories and cultural heritage of the "Lost Africans" in the Asia Pacific.
- **Community Engagement:** Engage with communities, build trust, and empower individuals to actively participate in heritage preservation.
- **Cultural Reconnection:** Foster connections with African roots through cultural exchanges, education, and collaborations.
- **Advocacy and Recognition:** Advocate for recognition, representation, and the rights of the "Lost Africans" within the African Diaspora narrative.



A 1904 picture showing Africans guarding and escorting a royal procession in India

Lost African Communities in the Asia Pacific

Explore the diverse lost African communities in the Asia Pacific region, including Afro-Indonesians, Siddis of India, Gullah Geechee in the Pacific Islands, African Communities in Papua New Guinea, and African Descent Communities in Australia. Learn about their unique histories, cultural traditions, and contributions to the African Diaspora.



Siddi Folk dancers, at Devaliya Naka, Sasan Gir, Gujarat, India

Who are the lost African Diasporas within the Asia Pacific region?

The term "lost African Diaspora" refers to individuals or communities within the Asia Pacific region whose African ancestry has been historically obscured or forgotten. It can encompass groups that may not self-identify as African or may have assimilated into local cultures over generations. While it is challenging to provide an exhaustive list, here are some examples of groups that could be considered part of the lost African Diaspora in the Asia Pacific region:

1. **Siddis of India and Pakistan:** The Siddis are descendants of Africans who were brought to the Indian subcontinent as slaves, merchants, or soldiers by Arab and Portuguese traders. Over time, they integrated into local communities while preserving some aspects of their African heritage.
2. **Bajau Laut of Southeast Asia:** The Bajau Laut, also known as sea gypsies, are a nomadic seafaring community found in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian countries. Some theories suggest that they may have African ancestry, possibly tracing back to enslaved Africans brought to the region during colonial times.
3. **Ma'bwana of Papua New Guinea:** The Ma'bwana people of Papua New Guinea have physical features and cultural practices that some researchers believe may indicate African ancestry. Their origins and connections to the African continent are subjects of ongoing study and speculation.
4. **Sri Lanka Kaffirs: The Sri Lanka Kaffirs, or Sri Lankan Creoles,** are a minority community with African and Portuguese ancestry. They trace their roots back to African slaves brought by the Portuguese to Sri Lanka during the colonial period. Although they have maintained some cultural elements, their African heritage has been diminished over time.

These are just a few examples, and there may be other groups or individuals across the Asia Pacific region with lost or obscured African ancestry. It is important to note that the history and identity of these communities are complex and subject to ongoing research and exploration.

Join the Reconnection Journey

Become a part of the Heritage Reconnection Alliance and contribute to the rediscovery and empowerment of the "Lost Africans" in the Asia Pacific region. Support our initiatives, participate in community engagement activities, and help preserve the rich cultural heritage of these communities.



African women of the Siddi community in India. Picture by Luke Duggleby, the Siddi Project



Siddi village in Sasan Gir. Indian people of African descent. Gujarat, New Year's Day, 2015.

Potential collaboration with the African Union

We seek a collaborative partnership with the African Union to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks in achieving our shared goals of promoting Pan-Africanism, preserving African heritage, and fostering solidarity among African communities worldwide.



Synergies and alignment of goals between the Heritage Reconnection Alliance and the African Union

1. **Collaborative Partnerships:** The Heritage Reconnection Alliance recognizes the pivotal role of the African Union in promoting Pan-Africanism, preserving African heritage, and fostering solidarity among African communities worldwide. We seek to establish a collaborative partnership with the African Union to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks in achieving our shared goals.
2. **Regional Integration:** By reconnecting the 'Lost Africans' in the Asia Pacific region to the African Union, we contribute to the vision of regional integration and strengthening the bonds of the African Diaspora. Our efforts align with the African Union's agenda of fostering unity, cooperation, and cultural exchange among African nations and communities.
3. **Promoting Cultural Diplomacy:** The Heritage Reconnection Alliance serves as a platform for cultural diplomacy, bridging the Asia Pacific region and the African Union through the shared heritage of the 'Lost Africans.' Our work aligns with the African Union's commitment to promoting African culture, diversity, and intercultural dialogue on the global stage."
4. **Youth Empowerment and Engagement:** The Heritage Reconnection Alliance places a strong emphasis on engaging and empowering the youth within the 'Lost Africans' communities. By supporting our organization, the African Union can contribute to youth development, education, and leadership opportunities, ensuring a brighter future for the African Diaspora.
5. **Reclaiming African Narratives:** The Heritage Reconnection Alliance's mission aligns with the African Union's objective of reclaiming African narratives, challenging historical distortions, and celebrating the rich contributions of African communities worldwide. Through our collaboration, we can amplify the voices and stories of the 'Lost Africans' and strengthen the African Union's efforts in promoting an accurate and inclusive African history.

Why should you support us?

For too long, the history and contributions of the lost African Diaspora within the Asia Pacific region have been overlooked and forgotten. Our project aims to uncover their rich heritage, reconnect them with their African roots, and foster a sense of belonging within the global African Diaspora community. We seek the support of stakeholders and financiers who believe in the power of reclaiming lost narratives and forging meaningful connections across continents.



By supporting our project, you will contribute to:

1. **Rediscovering Cultural Identities:** Through extensive research, community engagement, and documentation, we will unveil the hidden stories, traditions, and languages of the lost African Diaspora communities in the Asia Pacific region. We will restore their cultural identities and empower them to reclaim their heritage.
2. **Strengthening the Global African Diaspora:** Connecting the lost African Diaspora to the African Union will foster a sense of unity, solidarity, and shared history among diverse African communities worldwide. This connection will enhance cultural exchange, collaboration, and mutual understanding.
3. **Promoting Education and Awareness:** Our project will generate educational resources, curricula, and public awareness campaigns to shed light on the lost African Diaspora within the Asia Pacific region. By amplifying their stories, we will challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and inspire future generations to appreciate the global African heritage.
4. **Empowering Communities and Future Generations:** By engaging lost African Diaspora communities and involving them in decision-making processes, we will empower them to shape their own narratives, advocate for their rights, and strengthen community bonds. Additionally, the project will provide educational opportunities and skill-building initiatives, ensuring a brighter future for these communities.

Your support will not only help us uncover hidden histories and build bridges between continents but also promote cultural diversity, social justice, and global understanding. Together, we can bring recognition, inclusivity, and empowerment to the lost African Diaspora within the Asia Pacific region, fostering a more unified and vibrant global African Diaspora community.

About the Founder and Chairperson



HON. JOHN NZE-BERTRAM LLB LLM MPABUS A Visionary Advocate for Cultural Reconnection and Empowerment. Bridging Cultural Legacies and Empowering Lost Africans in Asia Pacific

Hon. John Nze-Bertram, a distinguished Australian and Nigerian citizen, is a legal expert and advocate with a deep commitment to cultural reconnection and empowerment. With a remarkable set of qualifications, including a Master of Laws specializing in international human rights law, as well as a Master of Business, and Master of Professional Accounting, John's expertise and knowledge are invaluable assets to the Heritage Reconnection Alliance: Lost Africans in the Asia Pacific (HRAALAP).

Drawing from his extensive experience and accomplishments, including his role as a Member of the Roll of Lawyers in the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory and his accreditation to practice at the Federal High Court of Australia, John brings a wealth of legal expertise to HRAALAP. As the Director and Principal Legal Officer of On Call Lawyers Australia Pty Ltd, he possesses a profound understanding of legal frameworks and is well-equipped to navigate the complex challenges facing the organization.

John's contributions extend beyond his legal prowess. He has been recognized internationally for his outstanding achievements in promoting multiculturalism in Australia, exemplified by his finalist nomination for the South Australian Governor's Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement. As a former member of the Second General Assembly of the African Union's Economic, Social & Cultural Council (AU ECOSOC), he has acquired firsthand experience in engaging with diverse stakeholders and advocating for the rights and representation of marginalized communities.

Furthermore, John's role as an expert delegate to China under the invitation of the African Union Ambassador to the People's Republic of China through the AU CIDO demonstrates his commitment to fostering improved relations between African residents in China and the local population. As the founder and chairperson of the Pan African Australia Diaspora Network (PAADN), he has successfully aligned the objectives of the network with the African Union's Agenda 2063 aspirations, facilitating collaborations that advance the African development agenda. His extensive connections and diplomatic acumen have allowed him to bring African Union delegations to Australia and establish crucial relationships with ministers, government department heads, and parliamentarians, strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations between Australia and Africa.

Moreover, John's participation in the AU CIDO's Diaspora Focal Points' 6+2 Steering Committee and the workshop at the African Union's Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, further highlights his dedication to harnessing the potentials of the African diaspora for the development of Africa. His contributions to defining the term "African diaspora" at AU CIDO programs and his involvement in developing projects and best practice systems underscore his commitment to integrating African diaspora representation within African Union bodies.

Beyond his professional endeavors, John's leadership extends to organizations such as Celebration of African Australians Inc ("Celebrate") and Sweet Mother International

Foundation Inc (SMI). As the chairperson of Celebrate, he spearheads efforts to showcase and appreciate the contributions of African Australians to the collective growth and prosperity of Australia. His role as the President of SMI reflects his commitment to improving maternal health in disadvantaged communities, mobilizing resources, organizing workshops, and campaigning for government involvement to reduce maternal deaths in Africa.

With his exceptional qualifications, vast network, and unwavering dedication, Hon. John Nze-Bertram possesses the skills and expertise to greatly contribute to the aims and objectives of HRALAAP. His legal acumen, multicultural advocacy, and extensive experience in promoting cultural heritage and identity make him an invaluable asset to the organization's mission of rediscovering, reconnecting, and empowering the "Lost Africans" in the Asia Pacific region.

Contact Us

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