

## MEET TERENCE YONG

Terence joined us on the 11 May 2022 in an informal dialogue session:  
**In conversation with... diaspora youth academics as mobility ambassadors and knowledge bridges.**

Terence holds a PhD in Higher Education Management from Tampere University, Finland. He is currently volunteering as [Diana Ry](#) Representative for Finland and Nordic countries.



**Hi Terence, could you tell us more about the academic network you are part of?**

The Diaspora Academic Network for Africa (Diana Ry) is an international organisation registered in Finland with branch offices in California, USA, Belgium, and Germany. The network was inaugurated in 2021 in the presence of representatives from the African Union, European Commission, Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Diana Ry promotes the vision that education is meant for socio-political and economic development as well as technological transformation of society. The primary purpose of the organisation is to reduce brain drain, contribute to brain gain, and stimulate a more equitable brain circulation between Europe, North America and Africa. For this reason, its role as an academic network is informed by the idea of knowledge production, dissemination and application in the development of the global economy. To achieve its goals, Diana Ry focuses on mobilising African academics, researchers and scientists in the diaspora and facilitating their involvement in the continent through remote teaching and research collaboration with African universities.

The network operates via academic clusters, including on health, entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem development, agriculture, digitalisation, conflict resolution and migration. These clusters constitute a very strong consultancy base for the network, which gives it capacity for multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary research activities for both public and private sector enterprises.

**Young academics are important beneficiaries of international mobility schemes to make the most of their employability and competencies for knowledge and idea-transfer between countries of heritage and residence. What programmes does Diana Ry have in place to connect diaspora academics with their homelands?**

One initiative is the 'Home Coming Programme' which is for academics and scientists wishing to contribute to their countries of origin when on holidays or during short stays. Diana Ry's National Contact Persons and Institutional Focal Points at partner universities encourage and support visiting diasporans to network and share knowledge and ideas with universities, organisation and other public and private stakeholders.

A lot of people migrate from the South to the North through different scholarship schemes but return to their countries of heritage after studies. There is a need to encourage collaboration and partnership between alumni of European Universities resident in Africa, their academic colleagues in the diaspora and universities. Diana Ry facilitates this through early-career researcher mobility programmes and the South-North Returnee programme.

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**Looking to the future, are there any key initiative you are working on and would like to share?**

At Diana Ry, we are currently working on collaborating and building partnerships with different diaspora organisations working on various aspects of development both in the diaspora and countries of heritage. So far, a few memoranda of understanding have been agreed upon with organisations towards enhancing capacities and building synergies. Diana Ry has also written and submitted project applications for development cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Africa.

**We will certainly keep an eye out for how Diana Ry's partnerships evolve. Good luck!**