

Entrepreneurship | Education

Global, award-winning, bilingual executive and thought leader with 30+ years of experience including advancing entrepreneurship, education, and social innovation. History of scaling impact-driven initiatives and mentoring emerging leaders.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE (ESC)

Johannesburg, South Africa

2024 to Present

A mission-driven company committed to advancing entrepreneurial leadership, sustainable development, and inclusive economic growth.

Executive Director and Founder

Founded ESC to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development through venture support, executive education and thought leadership aligned with the SDGs.

Advising Mission-Driven SMEs

- Led strategic planning and operational design for Champs for Change, a pan-African youth and sports social enterprise.
- Provide tailored advisory to mission-driven SMEs in areas such as growth strategy, partnerships, and ecosystem positioning.

Executive Education Design and Delivery

- Developed and delivered a full-day executive session on global economic trends (Executive Development Program (EDP24) - Economics Trends- Global & Local, Wits Business School).
- Supervise graduate students at GIBS providing career support through academic oversight and access to external opportunities.

Championing Entrepreneurial Growth and Ecosystem Reach

- Increased ESC's social media audience by 40%+ and impressions by 174%, leveraging global convenings (World Economic Forum (WEF), Skoll, Global Entrepreneurship Congress (GEC), Brookings) to drive engagement.
- Launched a guest blog with Lionesses of Africa, reaching 2M+ women entrepreneurs continent-wide.
- Created a monthly research newsletter with 640+ subscribers, elevating insights on entrepreneurship and leadership.

CHAMPS FOR CHANGE (C4C)

Johannesburg, South Africa

2023 to Present

Pan-African social enterprise empowering youth to explore careers in the sports industry and drive systemic transformation.

Co-Founder and Operations Lead

Lead the design and delivery of C4C's core initiatives, positioning sports as a workforce development pathway and contributor to inclusive growth, complementing work at ESC focused on entrepreneurship ecosystems, with C4C work grounded in hands-on execution, operations, and youth-facing programming.

Strategic Leadership and Foundation Building

- Launched C4C publicly during the Basketball Africa League (BAL) Finals in Johannesburg, featuring senior leadership from NBA Africa, BAL, McKinsey, and FIFA.
- Co-produced the C4C and We Will Lead Africa Sports Volume, a first-of-its-kind 40-story anthology spotlighting African sports professionals—now a pioneering career exploration tool for youth.
- Led event operations, program design, and high-profile guest curation to ensure meaningful participation and global visibility.
- Forging relationships across the sports, education, media, and investment ecosystems, laying the foundation for future regional hubs and training initiatives.

Storytelling, Media and Ecosystem Reach

- Drove media strategy resulting in the Sports Volume's:
 - Amazon #1 bestseller debut
 - 5-star Book Revue rating
 - Feature on *Chatting with the Experts* podcast
 - PR syndication across Yahoo Finance, Yahoo Canada, and 100+ outlets
- Enabled 500+ views of launch event across global audiences through digital content strategy.

- Positioned C4C as a platform for advocacy, storytelling, and industry inspiration.

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT AFRICA

Johannesburg, South Africa

2022 - 2024

One of Africa's largest youth economic empowerment organizations.

Social Equity Project Lead and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Member

Recruited to lead JA Africa's largest-ever youth development project, spanning nine countries and designed to equip 160,000+ underserved youth with entrepreneurship and work readiness skills—contributing to JA's growth to 1M+ youth across 20 African countries.

Program Design and Delivery

- Led a 3-year, 9-country project with direct reach targets of 160K+ and indirect reach of 340K youth; hit 95% of Year 1 and 96% of Year 2 direct targets.
- Exceeded benchmarks for business launches, digital program completions (103%), and social impact projects (101%).
- Initiated and delivered the Afrinnovate Youth Challenge, a regional pitch competition celebrating youth-led innovation.
- Directed curriculum completion and enhancement in collaboration with a Harvard University professor.
- Coordinated Africa-based academic study confirming that embedding mental wellbeing in entrepreneurship training improves outcomes.
- Delivered evidence-backed gains in skills, confidence, and employability.
- Co-developed M&E framework and authored SOP for digital literacy delivery in low-resource environments.

Organizational Growth and Stakeholder Engagement

- Strengthened JA's external visibility through diplomatic and governmental engagement, including Burkina Faso's Youth Minister and Sierra Leone's Vice President.
- Supported senior leadership in expanding reach from 500K to 900K youth in 2023 and ahead-of-schedule milestone of 1M youth and 20-country footprint.
- Represented the CEO on the JA Côte d'Ivoire Board; hired project, M&E, and mental well-being staff across multiple countries.
- Completed executive training in project management, communications, and delivery excellence.

Volunteer Engagement

- Designed and implemented volunteer program and onboarding process to mobilize hundreds of regional and international volunteers annually.

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Johannesburg, South Africa

2018 to 2022

Pioneering pan-African high school developing the next generation of African leaders.

Head of Selection (2021 to 2022) ■ Interim Head of Selection (2019 to 2021) ■ Special Projects Manager (2018 to 2022)

Worked closely with the CEO on strategic, operational, and administrative projects across leadership development, infrastructure planning, and institutional growth.

Talent Selection and Leadership Operations

- Led the Admissions and Selection team of five and managed departmental budgets of \$30K–\$60K annually.
- Increased institutional revenue in 2019 by designing and delivering record-breaking student admissions.
- Selected over 350 exceptional youth leaders from 40+ African countries, reinforcing ALA's pan-African mandate.
- Developed and implemented a global, cost-saving onboarding program, improving stakeholder experience and operational efficiency.

Strategic Projects and Infrastructure Development

- Led planning for the next phase of ALA's \$5.6M Campus Master Plan, including execution of a \$1.8M auditorium renovation project with enhanced capacity and smart tech.
- Delivered proposals to modernize procurement policies, improving cost controls and transparency.
- Advanced administrative systems, including a model student profile template that improved student access to global opportunities.

Stakeholder Engagement and Executive Support

- Organized high-level campus visits for key funders and dignitaries, including U.S. Senators Cory Booker and Chris Coons.
- Proposed a guest list change-management system to improve stakeholder interactions.
- Supported executive search for CEO's office, helping secure a new Executive Assistant.

AIMP – (African leadership initiative platform)

Lagos, Nigeria

2013 to 2015

NGO advancing values-based leadership across Nigeria through civic engagement and capacity building.

Chief Operating Officer

Oversaw organization-wide operations across strategy, finance, HR, fundraising, and systems, managing a core team of five. Worked closely with senior leadership to scale the organization's reach and long-term sustainability.

Key Achievements:

- Increased fundraising by 57% in the first year through donor engagement, proposal refinement, and program alignment.
- Led the organization's 5-year strategic planning process, facilitating stakeholder input and producing a clear implementation roadmap.
- Formalized internal systems by introducing an employee manual and annual performance review process, enhancing team alignment and accountability.
- Launched an in-house publishing venture to generate revenue and promote thought leadership, supporting financial sustainability.
- Converted and expanded two external youth programs into organization-owned training initiatives, enriching monthly programming with relevant, mission-aligned content.

30+ YEAR CAREER IN LANGUAGE SERVICES

North America and Africa

1992 to Present

Companies: Avantgarde Translations (Founder), LanguageWorks, TransPerfect Translations, Canadian Pacific Railway.

Built and contributed to high-performance teams across a personal venture, dynamic LSPs (Language Service Providers), and a major transnational corporation. Held roles ranging from Founder and Account Executive to Senior Project Manager and Certified Translator.

Career Highlights:

- Founded Avantgarde Translations, expanding operations across five countries and managing 130+ contractors, with annual revenue peaking at \$315K.
- Secured and delivered multi-year federal and corporate contracts using WBENC, NMSDC, DBE, and 8(a) certifications; recognized as "Top in Performance" by U.S. government clients.
- Led high-value client projects (\$1M–\$2M annually), including multilingual campaigns for major broadcasters, Fortune 500 law firms, and international advertising—published in BusinessWeek and displayed at global airports.
- Oversaw business development, team hiring, training, and process optimization during rapid growth periods—contributing to scale-up of what became a billion-dollar company.
- Received awards and fast-tracked promotions for quality performance, client satisfaction, and leadership potential in both corporate and entrepreneurial settings.

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Business Administration – University of Liverpool – Liverpool, UK
 - 65,000+ word thesis: [*Forms of Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\) in Small and Medium Enterprises \(SMES\): A Multisite Grounded Theory Study of Community Expert Observations and SME Experiences.*](#)
- Master of Business Administration – Queens University of Charlotte – Charlotte, NC
 - Capstone: Business plan for Cho Modern Asian, a futuristic restaurant and lounge concept.
- Master of Arts in French-English Translation – Université de Montréal – Montreal, Canada
 - Thesis: Translation of *La Femme Parrainée de la Catégorie de la Famille*, a comparative study of immigration law impacts on women in Canada, Quebec, the U.S., and Western countries.
- Bachelor of Arts in French-English Translation – Concordia University – Montreal, Canada
 - Admitted to the four-year specialization track for high-performing translation students.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Academy of Management – Appointed Deputy Liaison, Management Education & Development Division
- United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE)
- International Association for Business and Society (IABS)
- International Leadership Association (ILA)
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, South African Chapter – Environmental Committee Chair
- American International School of Johannesburg – Vice Board Chair; Governance & Finance Committees
- National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), Charlotte – President (2011–2012); former board roles
- Women Executives – Scholarship Selection Committee Member (3 years)
- Board of Advisors, Queens University McColl School of Business – Strategic advisor
- American Translators Association – Certified French–English Translator
- Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI) – Former Secretary & Vice President

AWARDS

- AiMP Network – Award for Significant Contributions, 20th Anniversary (2024)
- African Leadership Academy – Transformative Employee of the Year (2021)
- Enterprising Women of the Year – Honorable Mention
- Charlotte Business Leader Magazine – Women Extraordinaire
- Charlotte Business Journal – Woman in Business
- NAWBO Charlotte – Pioneer and Rising Star of the Year
- TransPerfect Translations – Rookie of the Year (1999)

PUBLIC SPEAKING

- Keynote and panel speaker on leadership, entrepreneurship, and language services at:
 - Wits Business School, WOMx by Yeidi, Entrepreneurship Education in Africa Summit, GIBS Entrepreneurship Research Group, WILD Network, ATA, and CATI.

ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

- Featured in Enterprising Women, Greater Charlotte Biz, Pride Magazine, and university alumni magazines (Concordia, Liverpool)
- Contributor, C4C and We Will Lead Africa: Sports Volume
 - Published articles in:
 - *The ATA Chronicle*
 - *CATI Quarterly*
 - *NAWBO Charlotte Briefly*
 - *Circuit*
- LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/dr-memuna-williams-dba-8193b01/recent-activity/articles](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-memuna-williams-dba-8193b01/recent-activity/articles)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Highly requested mentor with SCORE
- Annual mentor: Esther's Preparation Room, Queens University Alumni Program, St. Joseph's Convent Mentorship Program
- Jury member, ASVG 50 Most Influential Women in African Sports Awards

INTERESTS

- Reading • Physical Fitness • Lifestyle & Wellbeing



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