

# OKONG'O KINYANJUI

Queer African Network (QAN)

2021 Global Fellow



## BIG BOLD IDEA

Establish meaningful social and professional connections for LGBTQI+ persons of African heritage through a comprehensive digital information hub that globally crowdsources opportunities, transnational alliances, and affirming content.

## ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Queer African Network (QAN) is a social and professional digital networking platform for LGBTQI+ people of African heritage to socialize, find safe opportunities, access affirming content, and publish information. QAN supports members by creating personalized opportunity recommendations and an accessible database of verified mentors. QAN's marketplace facilitates the flow of global resources to help LGBTQI+ Africans move closer to financial stability. QAN's publishing service amplifies artistic expression. Most importantly, QAN accelerates mobilization on LGBTQI+ issues and helps LGBTQI+ Africans thrive as their authentic selves by facilitating safe ways to connect.

## PERSONAL BIO

Okong'o is the co-founder and executive director of the Queer African Network (QAN), a social and professional networking platform for LGBTQI+ persons of African heritage. Growing up in Kenya, Okong'o experienced firsthand the life-threatening isolation that comes from battling daily systemic oppression. Virtual networks sustained him until he found acceptance in his immediate environment. His desire to extend this lifeline to others led him to establish QAN and motivated him to establish global networks of solidarity with LGBTQI+ communities of African heritage in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Vancouver, San Francisco, and New York, all while studying and working for the TED Fellows program and the feminist consultancy Kore Global. Okong'o received the Strangway Award for Excellence (full academic scholarship) to study at Quest University Canada, where his thesis (which inspired QAN) received the showcase award. QAN thereafter received the Young Feminist Award and Okong'o presented at the NGO CSW65 Virtual Forum at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Okong'o previously received the Allan Gray Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurial Thinking and was selected to the Bezos Scholar Program.

### Organization/Fellow Location

Nairobi, Kenya

### Impact Location

Canada

United States

Kenya

### Organization Structure

Hybrid

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

