

The Afro-Descendant Community: Between Heritage and Modernity

Published 05/03/2025 by Hamza Ziad

2nd Edition of the Vision Summit in Toronto



Panelists and participants at the Vision Summit. Photos: Hamza Ziad, I-express.ca



Edith Taki, co-founder of Vital Vision.

“Within our Afro-descendant community, many people experience a feeling of inferiority compared to others,” says **Edith Léa Taki**, co-founder of **Vital Vision**.
“It’s a pattern that, unfortunately, risks being passed on to future generations.”

According to her, this feeling—often rooted in a historical and sociocultural legacy marked by inequality and a lack of positive representation—acts as a barrier to ambition and personal fulfillment for some members of this community in Canada.

A Rare Francophone Event

On March 1st, the student residence at **George Brown College** in Toronto hosted the 2nd **Vision Summit**, co-organized by **Vital Vision** and **MICRO** (Movement for the Inclusion of Racialized Communities in Ontario).

This event brought together around 100 participants under the theme “**Merging Ancestral Knowledge and Modern Technologies**,” highlighting the importance of historical continuity for the survival and vitality of peoples.

Taki also emphasized the rarity of francophone events of this nature, especially compared to English-language ones. This limits opportunities for francophone communities to gather, share, and draw inspiration in their own language.

“That’s why it’s so important for our community to take part in such events,” she insists,

“They offer the chance to meet influential figures who can inspire motivation, self-confidence, and offer wise advice for success.”



Participants at the Vision Summit workshops. Photo: Hamza Ziad

The Example of Japan

Elykiah Doumbé, founder and Executive Director of MICRO, illustrated the synergy between heritage and modernity by citing communities that have succeeded in blending the two. She gave the example of Japan, where the **Kaizen philosophy**—centered on continuous improvement—has been successfully integrated into corporate management.

“We are Afro-descendants. We are leaders. Which part of our heritage will we draw from to build the future?” she asks.

“Today, we gather with a clear intent: to foster dialogue between our ancestral legacy and future perspectives. This summit is our collective response to that aspiration.”



Elykiah Doumbe, founder of MICRO.

A LinkedIn Clinic

Alongside talks, roundtables, and networking sessions, the summit also offered a **LinkedIn clinic**. Participants received free evaluations of their profiles, personalized tips for improvement, and the opportunity to leave with a professional headshot.

“LinkedIn is one of the most powerful—and perhaps the most essential—professional networks,” notes Edith Taki.

“That’s why I strongly encourage our community to invest in their presence on this platform to maximize business opportunities.”



Networking session at the Vision Summit. Photo: Hamza Ziad

AI: A Hope for Endangered Languages

According to **UNESCO**, nearly **40% of the 8,324 recorded languages** worldwide are currently endangered. While this affects many regions globally, it also impacts Afro-descendant communities in Canada, where younger generations are gradually losing fluency in the languages and dialects of their ancestors.

In a context dominated by French and English, the transmission of heritage languages is especially difficult. Many Afro-descendant families struggle to preserve this linguistic heritage, given the demands of integrating their children into school and society.

In an interview with *I-express.ca*, **José Kouadio**, an AI and innovation expert, noted a growing awareness among many companies. They are now developing **language-learning apps**—such as **Duolingo**—which have, in recent years, added languages like **Swahili, Zulu, and Haitian Creole**.

“These initiatives will give our children the opportunity to learn their native language—even when it’s not passed on by their parents,” he says.

“Thanks to technological advances, we can now create powerful language preservation programs without needing on-site research—especially since many of these languages are oral, not written.”



African History Exhibition at the Vision Summit. Photo: Hamza Ziad



Sherman Sezibera, Edith Taki, and José Kouadio participated in a panel discussion at the Vision Summit. Photo: Hamza Ziad

Strong Support from Francophone Organizations

Jocelyne Sery, Executive Director of **Vital Vision**, highlighted that the event received significant support from several **francophone organizations**, who contributed to both the first and second editions, helping ensure the summit's success.

“It’s truly encouraging to see such strong engagement from the entire francophone community—whether through sponsorship, panel contributions, or the vital involvement of volunteers.”

“If these organizations supported us for the second edition, it means they trust us. This recognition motivates us to make this summit an unmissable event for the Toronto francophone community.”

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