



# AfroSwissters – Onboarding Guide

How the community works, what to expect, and how to engage meaningfully

Welcome to AfroSwissters. We're glad you're here.

# What AfroSwissters Is



AfroSwissters is a Switzerland-based, non-profit community created by and for people who identify as women of African descent — wherever they were born, wherever they have lived, and however their relationship to Africa is shaped.

Belonging here is not defined by birthplace, passport, accent, or proximity to the continent, but by identification, lived experience, and shared values. We understand that identity is complex, layered, and deeply personal.

"I am not African because I was born in Africa, but because Africa was born in me."  
— *Kwame Nkrumah*

That understanding sits at the heart of AfroSwissters. It's not about proving your connection; it's about honouring it.



MEMBERSHIP

# Who AfroSwissters Is For

AfroSwissters centers people who identify as women of African descent — those born in Switzerland, elsewhere in Europe, on the African continent, or beyond. We recognise that navigating layered identities, cultures, and systems is both a challenge and a source of profound strength.

## People We Centre

- Women who identify as being of African descent
- Those born in Switzerland, Europe, Africa, or beyond
- People navigating layered identities and cultures
- Those seeking community rooted in shared values

## Allies We Welcome

- Collaborators who share our values
- People committed to bridge-building rather than division
- Those willing to listen, learn, and engage with care
- Individuals who respect intentional centring



**This is not a space of exclusion. It is a space of intentional centring.** We are clear about our focus because clarity creates safety, depth, and trust.

# Our Position: Clarity Without Dilution

AfroSwissters is for all — and explicitly committed to empowering those who have historically been marginalised. We believe that clarity about purpose creates the foundation for genuine belonging, whilst vagueness often leads to confusion and shallow engagement.

## What We Do

We are clear about our focus because clarity creates safety, depth, and trust. Our mission explicitly names who we centre and why that matters. This specificity allows us to build programmes, partnerships, and spaces that truly serve our community's needs.

## What We Don't Do

We do not dilute our mission to appear neutral — a move that often erases the very people we aim to serve. And we do not weaponise our mission to create resentment or exclusion — an approach that undermines solidarity and trust.

## Why It Matters

Both paths weaken communities. Dilution renders us ineffective; weaponisation makes us destructive. We choose neither. Instead, we hold firm to our purpose whilst remaining open, relational, and grounded in our shared humanity.

# What We Stand For

AfroSwissters exists to cultivate bridge builders: strong without being hardened, driven without losing compassion, ambitious without domination, grounded without rigidity. We are building a community of people who can hold complexity, navigate difficult conversations, and create change without replicating harm.

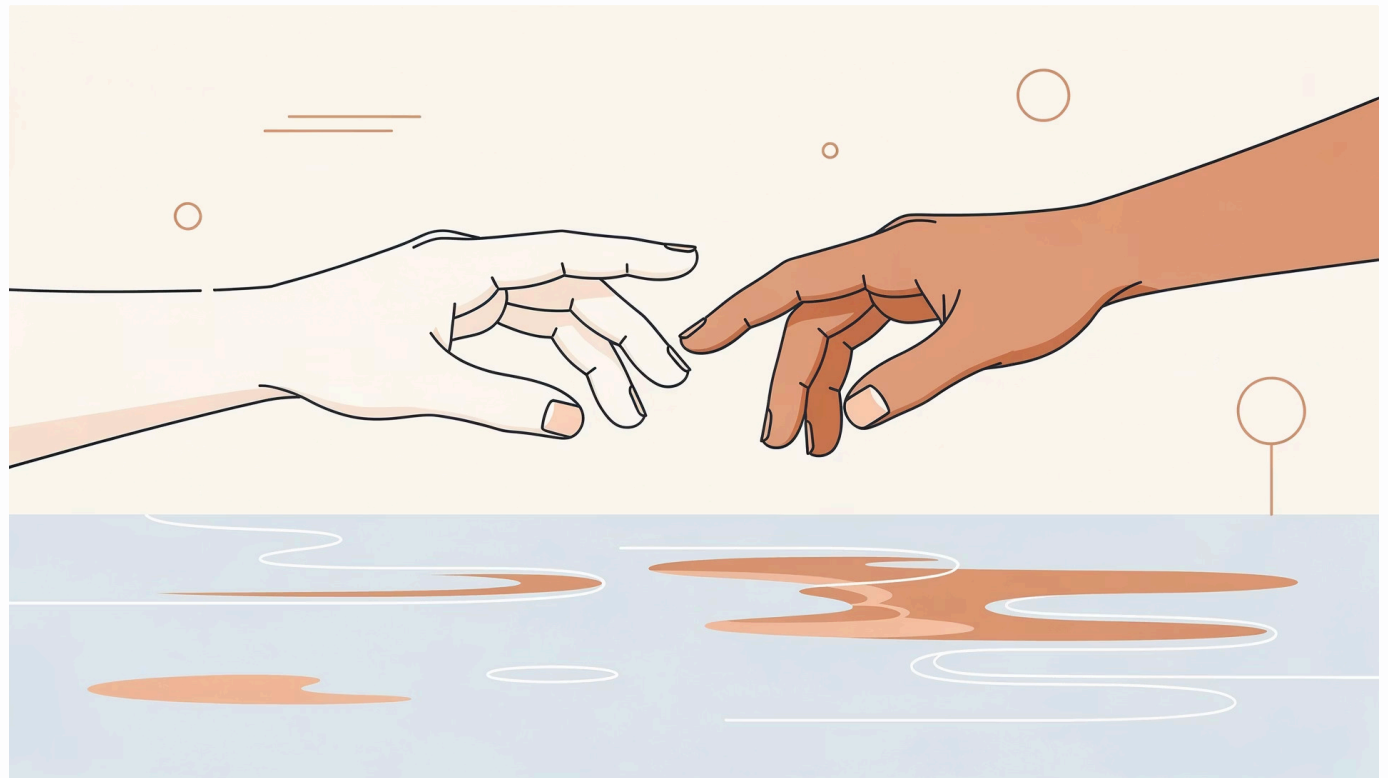
## We Acknowledge Reality

We do not shy away from difficult truths. Racism exists. Structural inequality is real. Many of us carry fatigue, grief, or anger from navigating systems not built for us. These realities shape our experiences and deserve to be named.

## We Are Explicit About What We Reject

- Hate does not dismantle hate
- Resentment does not build futures
- Fire does not extinguish fire

Hate multiplies itself. It spreads through communities, eroding trust and connection. We choose a different practice — one rooted in dignity, healing, and intentional bridge-building.



# Our Ethos: The Foundation of How We Work



## Healing Is a Form of Power

We believe that attending to our wounds, processing our experiences, and creating space for restoration is not weakness — it is radical strength. Healing enables us to show up more fully.



## Dignity Is Non-Negotiable

Every person deserves to be treated with respect, care, and full humanity. We do not compromise on this, regardless of difference, disagreement, or difficulty.



## Dialogue Is Not Weakness

Engaging in honest, sometimes uncomfortable conversations requires courage. We value people who can listen deeply, speak truthfully, and remain present through disagreement.



## Responsibility Is Shared

No one person holds all the answers or carries all the burden. We build together, learn together, and hold each other accountable with care and maturity.



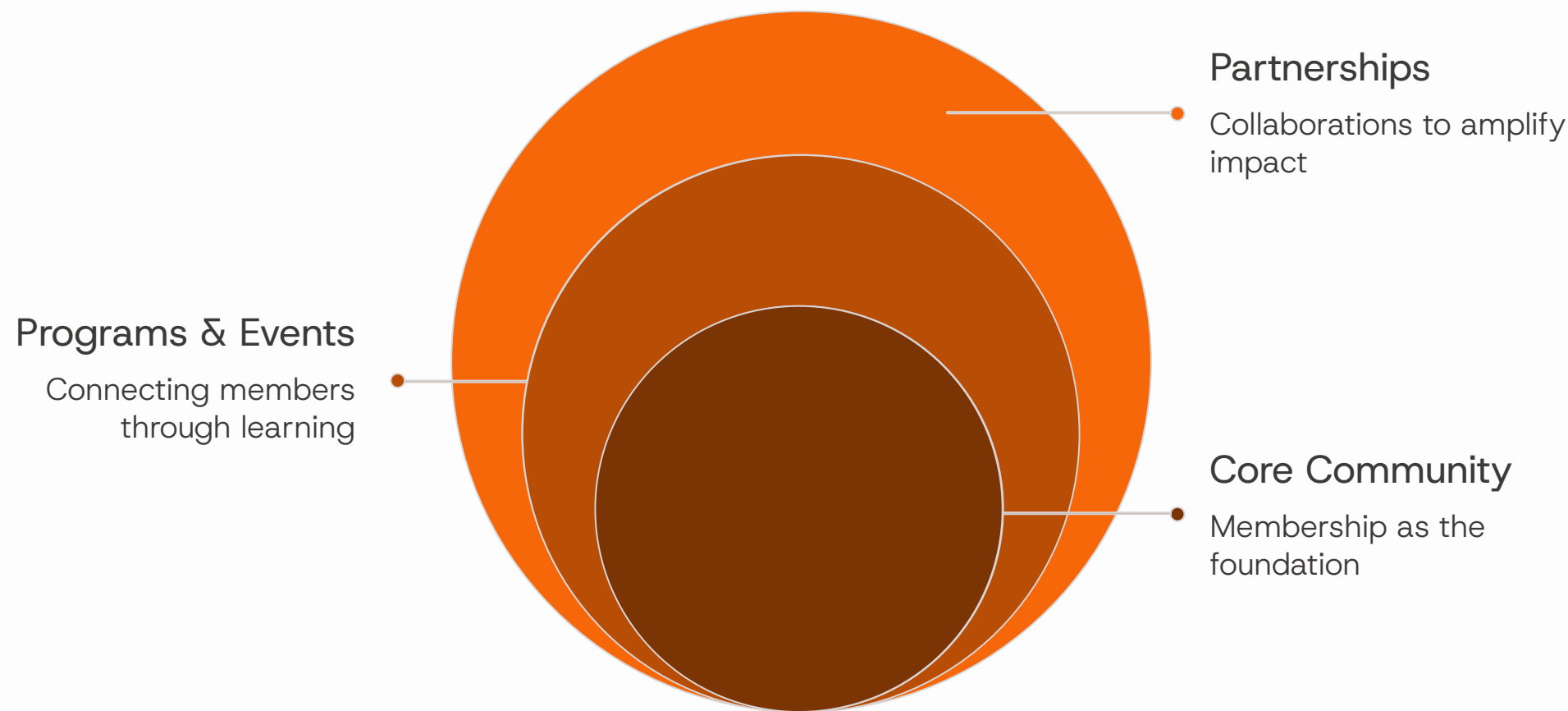
## Leadership Can Be Humane

We reject the false binary that leaders must be harsh to be effective. Leadership grounded in empathy, clarity, and integrity creates lasting change.

We are not here to reproduce the violence we critique. We are here to model something better — patiently, imperfectly, and together.

# How the Community Works

AfroSwissters operates across several interconnected layers, each designed to create meaningful connection, learning, and growth. Whether you're attending an event, joining as a member, or exploring partnership opportunities, there's a place for you to engage at the level that feels right.



This layered approach allows us to remain flexible, responsive, and grounded in our core mission whilst creating space for diverse forms of participation.

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<b>Community &amp; Membership</b> Membership is intentional and values-based. Members join through application and confirmation, ensuring alignment with our ethos. Engagement is invited, never demanded — we respect your capacity and rhythms.	<b>Programming &amp; Events</b> We curate thoughtful spaces including conversations and roundtables, workshops and learning formats, cultural events (theatre, art, music), and retreats and reflective gatherings. Some spaces are public; others are intimate, member-focused, or curated.	<b>Partnerships &amp; Collaboration</b> We collaborate with institutions, foundations, and companies. Partnerships are built on mutual value, not tokenism. The integrity of the community always comes first — we say no when alignment isn't there.

# What You Can Expect

## As a Member or Participant

When you engage with AfroSwissters, you enter a space that has been carefully designed to honour your humanity, your complexity, and your needs. We are committed to creating an environment where you can show up authentically.



### Thoughtfully Curated Spaces

Every event and gathering is designed with intention and care.



### Clear Communication

We value transparency, boundaries, and timely information.



### Confidentiality

What is shared in our spaces stays in our spaces.



### Room to Be Yourself

Show up as you are, not as who you think you should be.

## What We Are Not

It's equally important to be clear about what AfroSwissters is not, so expectations remain grounded and realistic.

- **Not always-on availability:** We are a community of people with full lives, not a 24/7 support service.
- **Not emotional labour on demand:** Care is given freely, not extracted or expected.
- **Not immediate access:** Visibility, opportunity, and connection take time to build.
- **Not a single "right way" to belong:** There are many ways to be part of this community.

**Belonging here is relational, not transactional.**



# How to Engage Meaningfully

Meaningful engagement in AfroSwissters is less about volume and more about quality. We value presence over performance, depth over speed, and care over convenience. Here are some ways you might choose to participate:



## Attend When Capacity Allows

Show up to events, workshops, or gatherings when your energy and schedule permit. There is no pressure to be everywhere.



## Listen Before Responding

Slow down. Take in what's being shared. Create space for others' voices before adding your own.



## Respect Lived Experiences

Honour that people's stories and truths may differ from your own. Curiosity over judgement always.



## Offer Resources, Not Demands

Share what you can — time, skills, knowledge, connections — without expectation of return.




## Give Feedback With Care

When offering feedback, do so with clarity, kindness, and a spirit of collaboration.



## Support the Work

Show up, contribute your skills, share our work onwards, or simply be a consistent presence.

 **Silence, pauses, and boundaries are respected here.** You do not need to be loud to belong. Your presence matters, however you choose to show up.

# A Closing Note: You Are Welcome Here



AfroSwissters exists because many of us have been visible without being held, included without being understood, present without being safe. This community is an ongoing attempt — thoughtful, evolving, imperfect — to do things differently.

We are governed transparently as a registered non-profit association under Swiss law, with a General Assembly as our highest body, a Board responsible for governance and finances, and funds used exclusively for the association's purpose. Trust, transparency, and accountability matter deeply to us.

## Shared Agreements

By being part of AfroSwissters, we ask that you engage with respect and openness, avoid harmful generalisations, hold space for complexity and difference, honour confidentiality, and address conflict with maturity, not public escalation. This is a human community, not a content feed.

**You are welcome here. At your pace. In your fullness.**

♡ CONNECT

✧ HEAL

🌱 GROW

☆ THRIVE



# Meet the Team



Safiatou Barry

Finances & Community Support



Lys Silva

Projects and Community Support



Talulah Patricia Bär

Partnerships & Programming

## Get in Touch

We'd love to hear from you! Whether you have questions, ideas, or just want to connect, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your thoughts are important to us, and we're here to help.

[contact@afroswisstes.ch](mailto:contact@afroswisstes.ch)