



AYUB KATO

Managing Partner | Smiling Faces International (SFI)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ayub Kato is a hospitality, service excellence and technology executive with more than 20 years of leadership experience across Africa and the United States. His professional journey began as a Security Guard at Sheraton Kampala Hotel in Uganda and progressed through hotel operations to General Manager-level leadership, including management experience with Marriott, Hilton and InterContinental hotels in the United States.

Today, as Managing Partner of Smiling Faces International (SFI), he works at the intersection of hospitality, customer experience, operational standards, technology and capacity building. His work spans service-excellence training, operational consulting, IT managed network services, project leadership and executive coaching for governments, international organisations and private enterprises across Africa and beyond.

20+

Years of leadership experience

25+

Major startup, transition & programme projects

15+

African nations with project exposure

1,000+

Staff & consultants managed

HIGHLIGHTS & RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Continental Lead Facilitator

Leading the 2026 ARSO Service Excellence Standard Training programme, delivered in partnership with Afreximbank across Dar es Salaam, Harare and Accra.

Creator of Service Frameworks

Developed the S.T.A.R.S Leadership Framework and the Zero-Defect Room Inspection methodology for practical hospitality service delivery.

AfCFTA & Standards Alignment

Contributing to the alignment of hospitality and gastronomic operations with standards and conformity-assessment priorities that support intra-African trade.

Global Project Leadership

Managed more than 25 major startup, transition and programme-management assignments across the United States, China and 15+ African nations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE & LEADERSHIP MILESTONES

Managing Partner & Lead Consultant

SMILING FACES INTERNATIONAL (SFI) • KAMPALA, UGANDA

- **Enterprise Profitability:** Leads recipe economics, yield management and food-waste reduction initiatives, with client gross-margin improvements reported at up to 20%.
- **Capacity Building & Service Evaluation:** Directs training and evaluation assignments, including the Enabel Lira Training project and service-evaluation work linked to the WeWork project.
- **Technology Integration:** Deploys customised Hotel Management Systems (HMS) and technology solutions to strengthen customer relationship management and operational efficiency.
- **Advisory & Transformation:** Supports government departments and private organisations seeking to improve service delivery, operating procedures and customer interaction.

African Regional Manager & Project Manager

COMPUTER FRONTIERS

- **People Leadership:** Managed more than 1,000 staff and consultants across international operations.
- **Google Fiber Project • 2011–2017:** Served as Project Manager in Uganda and Ghana with responsibility for HR, administration, budgeting, training and new-market expansion.
- **Kingdom of Lesotho:** Led the team that developed and deployed the national e-Visa service and contact-centre operations.

Global Account & Transition Management

INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

- **Strategic Accounts:** Held account-management and operations responsibilities on assignments involving the U.S. Department of State, Shell Oil / HP Technical Outsourcing, Jhpiego and the United Nations.

CORE EXPERTISE

Hospitality Standards

Service excellence, SOPs, quality assurance and guest experience

Training & Capacity Building

Facilitation, executive coaching and practical skills transfer

Operational Consulting

Yield management, recipe economics, food-waste reduction and service redesign

Quality Audits

Mystery shopping, call shopping and service-performance assessment

Technology & IT Services

Managed network services, HMS deployment and technology-enabled operations

Project Leadership

Startup, transition, programme management and multi-country coordination

SIGNATURE FRAMEWORKS

- S.T.A.R.S Leadership Framework
- Zero-Defect Room Inspection
- Service recovery & guest-relations tools

SELECTED PROJECT PORTFOLIO

ARSO / Afreximbank • 2026

Service Excellence Standard Training across Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana.

Google Fiber • Uganda & Ghana

Project management spanning HR, administration, budgeting, training and market expansion.

Enabel • Lira Training

Hospitality capacity building and practical service-delivery training.

Kingdom of Lesotho • e-Visa

Leadership of the national e-Visa service and contact-centre deployment team.

GLOBAL REACH, EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Project coordination and consulting experience across the United States, China and a broad African footprint.

United States	China
Uganda	Ghana
Tanzania	Zimbabwe
Nigeria	Senegal
Côte d'Ivoire	DR Congo
Sierra Leone	Kenya
South Sudan	The Gambia
Malawi	Lesotho
South Africa	Rwanda
Togo	

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- American Hospitality Academy & Kenya Utalii College
- Makerere University • Kampala, Uganda

BOARDS & AFFILIATIONS

- Board Member • American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) & Association of Technology and Information Services (ATIS)
- Member • Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) & Africa Travel Association (ATA)
- Member • Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) & Uganda Marketing Society (UMS)
- Member • Uganda Business Process Outsourcing Association (UBPOA)

SELECTED ORGANISATIONS & RECENT ENGAGEMENTS



African Regional Standards Organisation



Afreximbank



Enabel

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS & AFFILIATIONS



Additional selected organisations and accounts

U.S. Department of State • Shell Oil / HP Technical Outsourcing • Jhpiego • United Nations • Marriott • Hilton • InterContinental

"SERVICE EXCELLENCE. OPERATIONAL DISCIPLINE. PRACTICAL IMPACT."

Mr. Kato's work reflects a career-long commitment to improving the way organisations serve, operate and grow.

Personal: Married with two children. | www.smilingfaces.biz | akato@smilingfaces.biz