

## **Almaz Negash, Founder African Diaspora Network & Sr. Managing Director, Step Up Silicon Valley**

Almaz Negash is a social entrepreneur who believes in the power of individuals to gain economic self-sufficiency through social enterprise development and employment. Born in Eritrea, Negash immigrated to the United States in 1987 and earned her BA from the University of San Francisco and MBA from Golden Gate University. Negash is currently the Sr. managing director of Step Up Silicon Valley, a social innovation network and anti-poverty lab focused on increasing economic self-sufficiency through convening, advocating for policy changes, and incubating innovative solutions. Under her leadership, Step Up ideated and incubated, Franklin McKinley Women's Initiative, College Savings Circle, 1000 Out of Poverty, Nonprofit Data Integration project, and Pay for Success (a.k.a. Social Impact Bond), a \$6.9 million new model for financing to reduce chronic homelessness and \$11.2 million to reduce chronic mental health in Santa Clara County.

For the last two decades, Negash has sought to improve the quality of life of our communities through local and global partnerships. In 2010, Negash founded the African Diaspora Network (ADN) to inform and engage Africans in the Diaspora and facilitate direct collaboration with social entrepreneurs, innovators, and business leaders to invest in and improve the lives of everyone on the continent. Her greatest gift is her natural ability to bring together individuals from all walks of life to work on something bigger than themselves. Merging business expertise with the empathy built by years of cross-cultural experience in international trade negotiations and her work with heads of state, CEOs of corporations and nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and researchers of renowned educational institutions, Negash has sought to prove that people of different backgrounds and interests can work together to create positive, impactful change in their community.

Prior to her work at Step Up and African Diaspora Network, she served as Director of Global Leadership and Ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University. Later, she helped expand Women's Initiative for Self-Employment (WISE) to Silicon Valley where low income women were trained how to start micro businesses.

Negash has made enormous contributions both to her adopted country and to the continent of her childhood. Her rise in Silicon Valley is a statement to her agility. Her Eritrean upbringing and years of living and working in the United States seamlessly complement each other in a place that is vibrant, innovative, and embraces diversity.

Negash is a member of the United Nations Economic Council for Africa High Level Panel on Immigration and Migration, the co-founder of Global Women Leadership Network (GWLN). She is the author of an article on the Role of Africans in the Diaspora published in 2013 and contributing author of Awakening Social Responsibility published in 2007. She has written numerous articles on global trade, social and educational issues. Negash seats on paid and volunteer advisory board including Samaritan Medical Center, Mandalay Holdings, Ltd, Silicon Valley Education Foundation, and Singularity University. She has received many awards for her work including the 2014 African Diaspora Bridge Builders Award from the Diaspora African Forum Foundation.

Negash lives in Sunnyvale, California with her beloved husband, Regga Tekeste and has two children.