

From a Small Town in Cameroon to NASA: Lily Asongfac's Journey Proves Space Dreams Know No Borders



Buea, Sudouest Jul 8, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Lily Asongfac, an electrical and electronics engineer from Cameroon who became one of the first Cameroonians to work in the global space industry, recently took the TEDx stage to share the improbable path that took her from a classroom in Cameroon — where she first heard about the moon landing and couldn't stop asking how humans got there — to an internship at NASA.

Watch her full TEDx Talk here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeMKG8oWcxQ>

In her talk, Asongfac recounted growing up in a country with no space program, no aerospace schools, and few resources to pursue her curiosity. Undeterred, she pursued a degree in electrical and electronics engineering, later specializing in telecommunications, and used every opportunity — internships, competitions, and cold outreach on LinkedIn — to move closer to the space sector.

Her breakthrough moments included:

- Winning first place in a national essay competition on how space technology could help Cameroon meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Completing an internship with Cameroon's air traffic control agency, ASECNA, where she proposed using satellite-based tracking technology to improve aircraft monitoring over regions without radar coverage.
- Leading her university's first-ever space-related capstone project, collaborating with a satellite systems expert to propose repurposing a University of Cape Town satellite to help Gabon monitor its maritime borders.
- Being selected by the United Nations to attend one of the world's largest annual space gatherings, where she met Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African-American female astronaut to fly to space.
- Securing a fellowship at NASA JPL in Los Angeles, California through TechWomen (a US Department of States program), becoming the first Cameroonian to do that.

"I want children who are growing up in my country to know that opportunities exist in space, and you don't need to be the smartest — you don't even need to do science," Asongfac said in her talk. "The space industry has shown me that there's a place for everybody: space law, space finance, accounting, an entirely new space economy. The possibilities are endless, and you can do it from wherever you are."

Now five years into a career in the space sector — much of it conducted remotely from Cameroon, Asongfac continues to advocate for greater access to STEM and space-industry opportunities for young people across Africa, encouraging them to pursue ambitious goals regardless of where they start.

Her TEDx talk closes with a message aimed squarely at anyone who has been told their dream is unrealistic: take the next step, and keep taking it, because the destination may be closer than it appears.

About Lily Asongfac

Lily Asongfac is a Cameroonian electrical and electronics engineer working in the global space industry. She has represented Cameroon at major international space forums, contributed to satellite-based

projects addressing air traffic and maritime monitoring challenges in Africa, and completed a fellowship at NASA. She is a vocal advocate for expanding access to space-sector careers for young people across the continent.

Connect with Lily Asongfac:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lilyasongfac/>

X (Twitter): @LilyAsongfac

Instagram: @lilyrospeen



Media Contact

Authority On Demand

*****@authorityondemand.com

<https://authorityondemand.com/>

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