

African Diaspora Network Impact and Innovation Forums 2023

Transforming the African Narrative Through Philanthropy

Summary- Highlights - Action Steps

**Transforming the African Narrative
through Philanthropy**
August 23, 2023 at 4PM WAT. Register at bit.ly/bpmwebinar23



Almaz Negash
Founder and Executive Director,
African Diaspora Network
(Moderator)

Thelma Ekiyor
Chairperson, Afrigrants
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Adaora Ikenze
Director of Public Policy for
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Camaren Peter, PhD
Associate Professor,
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Graduate School of Business

Kady Sylla
Senior Advisor - Africa,
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United States (KBFUS)

Presented By



Context:

Poverty, conflict, high youth unemployment, and governance issues are realities in Africa that sometimes make it difficult to see what else is happening, such as the increase in innovative start-ups, growth in fintech infrastructure, alternative energy solutions and healthcare advancements. Africans in the Diaspora are often also focused on the negatives rather than the opportunities these challenges present for investment.

Changing the narratives on Africa is a collaborative effort that should be intentional and strategic. Philanthropy can play an important role in catalyzing solutions. The 2023 Black Philanthropy Month (BPM) event organized in collaboration with Africa Diaspora Network and Afrigrants Foundation has convened a panel of experts for a conversation on this important theme.

In recent years, [Africa has seen](#) tremendous increases in private funding, resulting in rapid growth for technological advancement, educational resources, and economic growth. However, more philanthropic work is needed from an international and domestic perspective in order to ensure the continued development in Africa and for the continent's potential to be met.

It is no surprise that political struggles and violence pose major difficulties to smooth philanthropic action. With a wide variety of humanitarian concerns still at the forefront of attention, it is necessary to address these issues at a direct community level with sustainable financial plans to meet the goals of proposed solutions.

Philanthropy towards the continent has [resulted](#) in a growing middle class, providing an increase in the pool of actual and potential philanthropists. This is an important factor as it supports a model that encourages philanthropy from within, allowing for a more direct and inclusive approach to development in the continent. An important aspect of philanthropy is that it supports betterment in all aspects of life and society in Africa, addressing issues ranging from food security, to gender equality, and tech.

How do you contribute to changing the negative narratives on Africa? How can philanthropy and other forms of social investing invest in transforming "Brand Africa?" What are the key impediments to a positive global narrative on the African continent? The Diaspora are an important constituency in changing the narrative, what tangible ways can they contribute? How has the narrative of philanthropy in Africa changed over time? What role do philanthropists play in shaping the narrative of Africa? What changes are needed so philanthropy in Africa can operate within political instability and narrow the disparity gap? What are some best practices to keep Africans at the forefront of philanthropic giving?

Summary:

- **It will take all of us to make it happen:** It is all of our responsibility to ensure that investment in Africa for Africa is well-executed and for the common good of society.
- **Philanthropy is a small space, but it can catalyze things:** Philanthropy in general, and even more so African Philanthropy, is an incredibly small space. However, philanthropy gets the ball rolling and starts the tough conversation for what society is most in need of.
- **We are all philanthropists:** Anyone and everyone can be a philanthropist. Most likely you have always been, giving back to the community in some way. Immigrants who come from Africa and start from scratch, have given back home to Africa no matter their circumstances. We can all lend a hand.

Top Quotes:

- **Adaora Ikenze:** "Social Media is the most catalytic tool in transformation for communication around communities. We have a responsibility to make sure it is used appropriately. When it comes to philanthropy, our "Made by Africa, Loved by the World" campaign focuses on small businesses, women, and communities, to ensure that they particularly have tools and resources to amplify their voices."
- **Kady Sylla:** "There is a diaspora philanthropy, and people in Africa or Africans abroad give because they are. However, there is no infrastructure except in maybe South Africa and Senegal, to systemically give back to the continent."
- **Almaz Negash:** "Whether we find ourselves in Africa or anywhere across the globe, securing funding remains a challenge. It's imperative that we exert our utmost efforts to foster inclusive growth for all."
- **Thelma Ekiyor:** "There are only a few of us in the decision-making room and those of us that are there are usually the minority voice or completely mute. I am tired of fighting. Having to consistently fight to make the case for Africa is tiring."
- **Dr. Camaren Peter:** "What I learned is that you have to prepare the ground, waiting for the moment, and then when you get the opportunity to make transformative change, you grab it. Revolutions don't just happen, they see it lying in the street before it unfolds."
- **Dr. Jackie Bouvier Copeland:** "In the diaspora, we do have the infrastructure to model the kinds of capital systems and economic justice that we envision. I'd encourage everyone to talk about how we can pool resources among our organizations to make a difference. To make real the improved capital access. "

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Re-visit the recording:** We urge those who attended or who were not able to attend to watch the recording from the webinar. The lessons, resources, and idea-building shared were invaluable and that is only a piece of the conversation.
- **Social Media Mobilization:** Urge your friends, family, and colleagues to support African advancement through philanthropy, resource-sharing, and other means of support they can provide to those who need.
- **Explore Investment Opportunities:** If you have the capacity, explore investment opportunities on social enterprises and start-ups by Africans in the continent and in the diaspora and support their social impact goals.
- **Use the resources available to you:** This [fact sheet](#) by the White House details the initiatives that the US is taking to support African diasporans and make them a permanent role player in policy change. See how you can get engaged and support these initiatives.

Resources:

Click [here](#) to learn more about Impact and Innovation Forums and upcoming sessions.

Get to know the speakers better. Visit their organizations' websites.

- [King Baudouin Foundation United States](#)
- [Meta](#)
- [Allan Gray Centre for Values-Based Leadership, UCT](#)

Stay in touch with the panelists:

- [Ms Adoara Ikenze](#), Director, Public Policy (Anglophone West Africa) at Meta
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 - [Dr. Camaren Peter](#), the Executive Director of CABC in South Africa
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 - [Kady Sylla](#), Senior Advisor - Africa, KBFUS
Email: kady@kbfus.org
- Session recording: <https://youtu.be/2m9LXK7lkjl>

Chat Recap:

- **Donna Robinson:** Yes, and on the topic of Sudan, the Darfur Women Action Group is a phenomenal survivor-led organization that supports women and girls in Darfur: <https://darfurwomenaction.org>
- Angela Edesebe: Great discussion on the role we can each play in changing the narrative on Africa. As Education Administrator and Faculty, I work on sharing the good, the bad, and the Ugly about our beloved continent. The potential of the continent is too numerous to name.
- **Martin Russell:** Here's an idea.....Isn't the greatest philanthropic investment that the African diaspora can make is to invest philanthropically in the likes of ADN to build the infrastructure of diaspora philanthropy for the African diaspora? If you look at the diaspora communities that have truly hit scale in this area, this is a step that they have all taken....i.e., to invest in themselves to build the infrastructure of strategic giving in the diaspora (and strategic giving is not just money of course!).
- **Dr. Jackie Copeland:** Our Women Invested to Save Earth Fund (thewisefund.org) is a US-based public charity that channels both grants and loans to Black and Indigenous communities in Africa and worldwide, especially women-led climate tech businesses as well as community-based philanthropies. Our US donors get a tax break and impact.
- **Sarah Drake:** There are seven orgs here in MN that are women led and most of us are not paid, or very minimally, and we connected to support each other. But we've grown to a collaborative to take collective action on policy and advocacy and fundraising to amplify the work. As individuals, people and funders didn't really care, but as a collective of women (African, Diaspora, and white) we are finally starting to get people to listen.

Continuing the Conversation & Action:

The African Diaspora Network extends an invitation for you to participate in the upcoming gatherings, reaffirming our dedication to sustaining active engagement and meaningful action.

- Sep 12 at 8 am PST - [Builders of Africa's Future Pitch Day](#)
- Sep 20 at 4 pm EST - UNGA Side Event, Beyond Remittances: African Diaspora Investment - If you are interested in attending, email info@africandiasporanetwork.org. Space is limited.

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- Oct 26- Save the Date for [Accelerating Black Leadership and Entrepreneurship \(ABLE\) Pitch Day](#)
 - March 20-22, 2024- Save the date for the African Diaspora Investment Symposium (ADIS24)

Thank You!

African Diaspora Network is grateful to the speakers for sharing their insights on transforming the African narrative through philanthropy. Thank you to everyone who joined!

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