

ADIS26

DIASPORA

WHITE

PAPER



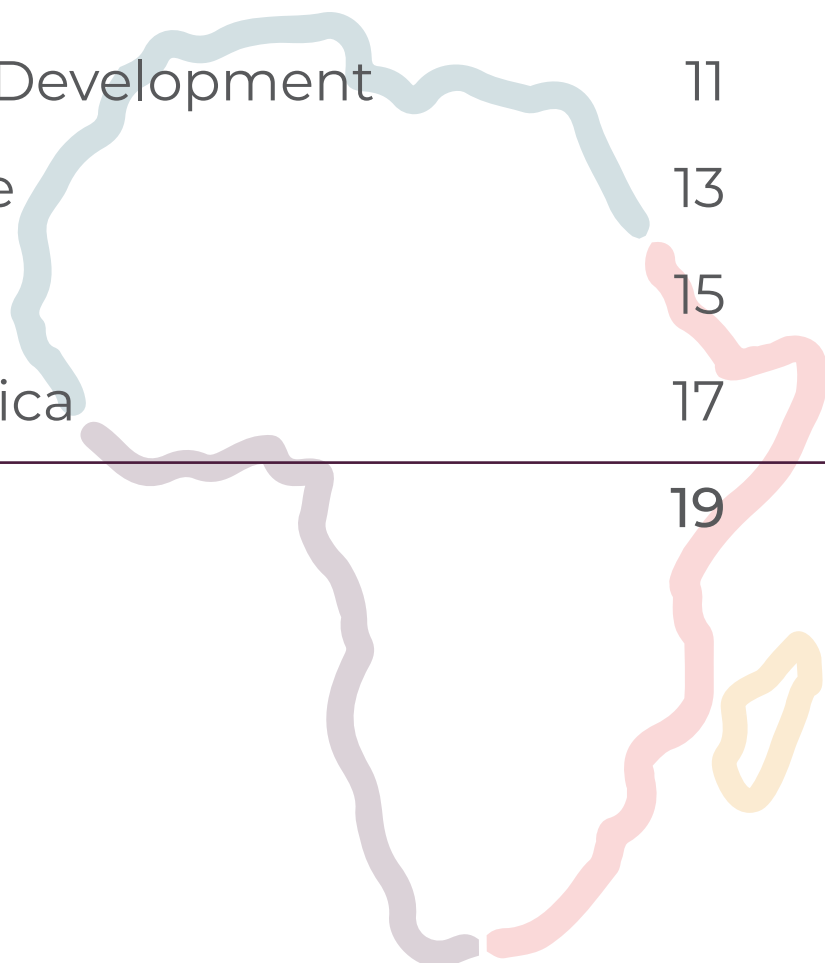
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THE AFRICAN DIASPORA HAS SPOKEN.

HERE IS WHAT IT SAID.

Background

A diaspora white paper from the African Diaspora Network based on the proceedings of the 11th Annual African Diaspora Investment Symposium — Santa Clara University, March 25–27, 2026

The African diaspora sends over \$100 billion home every year. It is an extraordinary act of love. It is also not enough. Not because the amount is insufficient, but because love alone cannot build the institutions, industries, and innovation ecosystems Africa needs for the next generation. The question this document addresses is a simple one: what does it look like when the diaspora goes beyond remittances?

In March 2026, value-aligned Africans, African diaspora, and friends of Africa gathered at Santa Clara University in the heart of Silicon Valley to find out. Scientists and venture capitalists. Policymakers and entrepreneurs. Clinicians and engineers. Students and CEOs. They came not just to listen, but to contribute their expertise, their networks, their commitments, and their demands. What you are holding is a record of what they concluded.

A Collective Position. A Roadmap Forward.

Across six core themes — Healthcare & Bioscience, Capital for Impact, the Future of Work, Ethical AI, Policy in Action, and Partnerships for Africa — this document captures what mission-driven diaspora members and their allies are thinking, building, and demanding right now. It surfaces challenges that cannot wait, solutions already underway, and recommended policy actions and investments. This is both a position paper and a roadmap: it reflects where the diaspora stands and lays out how we want to move forward. And finally, it is an instruction manual for anyone who wants to know how to engage the diaspora meaningfully, not transactionally.

Building the Bridge. Building the Framework.

ADIS26 was intentionally an inflection point. Behind it was ADIS25 — ADN's 10th anniversary — where the energy in the room made one thing unmistakably clear: the people doing the most important work on Africa's future were already in conversation with each other, and they were ready to go deeper. Ahead is ADIS27, the first time ADN will bring this convening home to the African continent. ADIS26 was the bridge — the moment to be informed, to engage across sectors and borders, and to act upon the commitments that would ensure ADIS27 archives the impact we envision. As the African saying goes: if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. These pages are a roadmap for diaspora going far together.

White Paper Structure and How to Use:

Key recommendations and policy priorities are presented first, followed by deep dives into each of the six themes. The paper concludes with specific ways individuals and organizations can get involved. Partners listed throughout do not necessarily endorse every recommendation — they are acknowledged as active contributors to the discussion.

Read the recommendations. Share the findings. Pick one thing you can do. If you are a policymaker, an investor, or an institution wondering how to engage the diaspora: start here. Contained in these pages are templates for meaningful partnership. This is the diaspora: informed, engaged, and ready to act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ADIS26 brought together leaders and innovators across six thematic areas to ask one defining question: what does it look like when the African diaspora shows up not just as senders of remittances, but as co-builders of Africa's future? What follows are the high-level recommendations and policy actions that, if acted on collectively, would most meaningfully move the needle.

THE CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITY

The diaspora must move from goodwill to structure. Sufficient capital, expertise, and networks exist. What is missing is the formal architecture — the registered organizations, investment vehicles, advocacy coalitions, and mentorship pipelines — that converts individual diaspora motivation into collective, measurable impact. Building that architecture, theme by theme, is the work ahead. ADN and a number of mission-aligned organizations are doing just that. ADIS27 on the African continent is where we bring it home.



HEALTHCARE AND BIOSCIENCE

The talent exists. The capital and infrastructure are not — yet.

- **Raise \$1 billion for African health R&D** through diaspora investors, multilateral partners, and mission-driven capital on a five-year horizon. African biotech demands patient capital, not quick returns.
- **Reform procurement** to stop penalizing African biotech companies with higher customs duties than multinationals and mandate that globally funded health research includes African genomic data, African trial sites, and African scientists from the design phase.
- **Create a diaspora-linked clinical trial investment vehicle** — a structured fund for phase one and two trials with transparent metrics and a five-year horizon — to end the boom-and-bust cycle stalling African drug development.



CAPITAL FOR IMPACT

Beyond remittances: infrastructure for diaspora investment must be built.

- **Reduce remittance costs to the 3% SDG target.** Costs of up to 9.9% drain billions before they reach African communities. Governments and regulators on both sides must accelerate the conditions that bring costs down.
- **Create diaspora investment instruments** including structured bonds, investment accounts, and tax-advantaged savings vehicles that give diaspora members legal mechanisms to invest, not just send, money home.
- **Require US banks to serve diaspora-linked businesses** rather than de-risking them out of the financial system, and expand Export-Import Bank access so African SMEs can use instruments already available to them.



EDUCATION & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Brain circulation, not brain drain — but only if we build the conditions to make it sustainable.

- **Fund ecosystem-level workforce infrastructure**, not individual scholarships. Vocational training networks, mentorship pipelines, and career placement platforms serve thousands and compound over time. Individual awards do not.
- **Create formal diaspora mentorship recognition frameworks.** Tax incentives, visa facilitation, and formal partnership agreements would make sustained diaspora mentorship structurally easier for mentor and mentee alike.
- **Link critical minerals wealth to workforce development.** Resource contracts should require local workforce training, vocational investment, and technology transfer as standard conditions — not optional add-ons.

RECOMMENDATIONS



AI FOR AFRICA'S FUTURE

Africa is not behind in AI. It is building it differently and it must own what it builds.

- **Mandate population-specific validation** for any AI tool deployed in African public services. The assumption that tools built on Western datasets transfer automatically is not just inaccurate, in many cases it is harmful.
- **Center community consent in data governance.** Every national AI framework should enshrine informed consent, data transparency, and community benefit requirements especially for government AI contracts at scale.
- **Invest in African-language AI infrastructure** and champion open-source AI as the preferred model for publicly funded initiatives — decentralizing knowledge and enabling African developers to build for African realities.



POLICY IN ACTION

The diaspora has political power. The urgent task is to organize it.

- **Urgently reauthorize and modernize AGOA** before it expires in December 2026, with updated rules of origin aligned with AfCFTA and streamlined implementation — protecting trade infrastructure supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.
- **Institutionalize diaspora engagement at the national level.** Diaspora organizations should be strategic co-creators of policy and investment frameworks, not passive recipients of policy decisions.
- **Build Africa-led data governance frameworks.** Using the European GDPR as the default framework creates a sovereignty gap. Diaspora should advocate for continental African frameworks that reflect African realities and innovation ecosystems.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR AFRICA

Partnerships that change systems require long-term vision, not just short-term projects.

- **Reform the narrative infrastructure around African sovereign risk.** Africa pays \$4.2 billion annually in borrowing costs because of inaccurate perceptions of risk. Diaspora-led storytelling — rigorous, data-backed, and amplified — is a financial instrument. African-led credit rating mechanisms are the long-term structural solution.
- **Encourage gender-lens criteria** in diaspora investment vehicles and catalytic capital funds. Women in Africa reinvest up to 90% of income into their communities. Leaving them out is not only inequitable, it is economically irrational.
- **Fund long-term systems change.** Grant-making and investment timelines must match the actual pace of systems change — multi-year, flexible, and outcome-focused rather than project-based.



“You are not waiting for the infrastructure of the future, you are creating it today.”

— Dana Nau Francois, Program Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Healthcare & BioScience

How the Diaspora Can Unlock Africa-Led Research and Development



Overview

Africa carries one of the heaviest disease burdens on earth, yet remains profoundly underrepresented in the global systems built to address it — from genomic research databases to pharmaceutical pipelines to clinical trial networks. Global health financing is contracting, traditional development assistance is declining, and big pharmaceutical companies remain focused on diseases profitable enough to sustain shareholder returns. This is precisely the moment when diaspora capital, expertise, and advocacy must fill the gap — not as charity, but as strategic investment. A generation of African and diaspora scientists, entrepreneurs, and investors is already building companies, tools, and partnerships that treat Africa not as a recipient of global health solutions, but as the origin of them. The decisions made in the next two to five years about clinical trial infrastructure, genomic data ownership, and local drug manufacturing capacity will shape African healthcare for a generation.

The Science Is Already There. Now We Need the Capital.

Prof. Javier Gordon Ogembo opened ADIS26's GC-ADEA Private Workshop with a grounding provocation: Africa is 65 years old as a collection of independent nations; the United States is 250. The call was not for lowered ambition, but for honest reckoning about where investment must go and how the diaspora can accelerate a process the continent is already building. The science is there. What is missing is the infrastructure to take it to market. Dr. Yaw Bediako of Yemaachi Biotech made that case with precision: every drug designed without African genomic data performs poorly — or not at all — for African patients. His company is building the largest genomic database for Africans with cancer, working toward 15,000 sequenced genomes that could redefine precision medicine globally. **Africa holds the keys to the next generation of medicine, and the world is not yet paying for the locks.**

Dr. Menghis Bairu of Bio Usawa brought the manufacturing reality into focus. His company built a biomedical plant in Rwanda, registered a product treating diabetic eye disease at a fraction of Western cost, and has a monoclonal antibody product entering the market in the second half of 2026 — 90% funded by the African diaspora. His message was direct: a vision without execution is an illusion. **Investors going into African biotech need to be thinking in five-year horizons, not two.** Clinical trial volume remains far too low to sustain an ecosystem despite recent growth. A validated internal workshop report developed with GC-ADEA participants reinforced this: the recurring boom-and-bust cycle of temporary trial sites is a structural failure that diaspora can help address by advocating for continuous clinical trial units and supporting African clinical research networks that operate between major studies.

The two co-creation sessions 'Health in Your Hands' sponsored by Opella took the conversation from systems to solutions. Facilitated by ADN Board Chairman Josh Ghaim and Michael Moscherosch,

both former Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer executives, participants identified five priority innovation areas: closing the patient documentation gap; expanding diagnostic access through AI; formalizing traditional medicine within primary healthcare; shifting to proactive care delivery; and empowering frontline health workers through training and enabling policy. Priscilla Asante of mPharma grounded it in affordability: patients in Africa routinely choose between continuing medication and paying school fees. **Any solution that does not start with that reality will not survive contact with it.** Across all sessions, the most powerful theme was storytelling — making African bioscience visible and investable to a global audience that currently cannot find it.

Stats / Figures

Less than
3%

Despite Africa being the ancestral home of modern humans and the most genetically diverse continent on earth, less than 3% of global genomic datasets come from individuals of recent African origin. ([Roche African Genomics Program](#))

25% vs.
1.1%

Africa bears 25% of the global disease burden, yet in 2023 only 1.1% of clinical trials initiated globally were hosted on the continent. (World Health Organization, 2023 — via [World Economic Forum](#), 2025)

\$30 vs.
\$2k

The same injection that prevents blindness in diabetic patients costs \$2,000 in the West and can be produced for \$30. (Dr. Menghis Bairu, ADIS26)

\$1 BILLION

The collective funding target set by the Grand Challenges-African Diaspora Engagement Accelerator (GC-ADEA) participants at ADIS26 for Africa-led health R&D, targeting diaspora investors, multilateral partners, and mission-driven capital over a five-year horizon.

Healthcare & BioScience (Cont.)

How the Diaspora Can Unlock Africa-Led Research and Development



Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- » **Local manufacturing is non-negotiable.** Building the infrastructure for locally manufactured drugs and other health products — and advocating for the policy environments that support it — is a diaspora priority.
- » **African enterprise organisations must anchor long-term biotech capital.** The model must shift toward patient, mission-driven capital, and diaspora investors can contribute to leading that shift.
- » **Reform procurement** to stop penalizing African biotech companies with higher customs duties than multinationals pay — a structural disadvantage diaspora advocates should target directly.
- » **Create a diaspora-linked clinical trial investment vehicle** — a structured fund for phase one and two trials with a five-year horizon — to end the capital gap that stalls early-stage African drug development.
- » **Mandate African genomic inclusion** in any globally funded research intended to produce medicines for African populations - beginning in the design phase.
- » **Establish African universities as IP generators**, licensing innovations to companies for commercialization rather than developing products themselves.
- » **Build access requirements into product development agreements** so any product developed with diaspora or public funding includes an affordability provision for the African patient.

Partners Involved

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation | Opella | Yemaachi Biotech | Bio Usawa | Sproxil | mPharma | Gleword Pharmacy | Ignite Venture Studio | Periodic Element LLC | African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Disease (ACEGID) | Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (University of Ghana) | African Institute of Biomedical Science and Technology | H3D (University of Cape Town) | WACCBIP | NCD Rights Lab | Kenyan Doctors USA | African Clinical Trials Network | Roche-Genentech

Reports & Further Reading

- [Why Expanding Clinical Trials in Africa is Key to Global Health](#) — African Researchers Magazine, 2025 A detailed breakdown of the clinical trial gap in Africa, its consequences for medicine access, and the case for diaspora-driven advocacy to close it.
- [Clinical Trials in Africa: Collaboration is Key](#) — Health Policy Watch, 2025 Examines the regulatory, capacity, and funding barriers preventing Africa from reaching its clinical trial potential, and what coordinated action looks like.
- [Six Ways to Empower African Research and Development for Health](#) — Nature Health, 2026 Practical, researcher-led recommendations for removing barriers to African-led health R&D.
- [Improving Access to Innovative Medicines in Africa Starts with Clinical Trials](#) — Gavi / VaccinesWork, 2025 Explores how clinical trial inclusion is the gateway to medicine access and what under-representation costs African patients and global health security.



“A vision without execution is called illusion. In the biotech field, three ingredients are necessary: science, talent, and finance.” — Dr. Menghis Bairu, Co-Founder & CEO, Bio Usawa

“Work collaboratively together to leverage capital as a unit. Once the world sees what we can do, they will catch up.” — Dr. Yaw Bediako, CEO & Co-Founder, Yemaachi Biotech

“Let’s think about what’s really happening on the ground, and how we can address that.” — Priscilla Asante, Chief of Staff & VP Strategic Initiatives, mPharma

“Clinical trials in Africa have gone up in the last five years. The biggest challenge is getting enough business coming in to sustain the development.” — Dr. Susan Winks, Chief Operations Officer, H3D Foundation



Capital For Impact

Channeling Diaspora Wealth Into Africa's Financial Future



Overview

The African diaspora sends over \$100 billion home every year — more than the continent receives in foreign direct investment from most sources — yet the vast majority flows into household consumption rather than productive investment. The infrastructure to do otherwise barely exists: investment vehicles are inaccessible to non-accredited investors, and the financial systems needed to connect diaspora capital with African entrepreneurs remain fragmented. Global development finance is simultaneously contracting, aid budgets are shrinking, and the political appetite for concessional financing is weakening. The window to build the funds, platforms, and regulatory frameworks that would support investment in African enterprise is open right now. Waiting means ceding the design of Africa's financial systems to institutions that were not built with Africa in mind.

From Remittances to Returns: Rewriting the Rules of Diaspora Capital

Todd McDonald, President of Liberty Bank — the largest African American-owned bank in the United States — opened with a milestone and a method: after more than a year of work, Liberty Bank was completing the first exchange of business between an African American-owned bank and an African bank. The method: be intentional with your deposits, do business within the diaspora, and make the introductions. Three actions requiring no permission that can start today. Ayo Sopitan of Metalex Commodities sharpened the message: include Africa in your portfolio allocation — not out of charity, but out of strategic recognition that 70% of the world's cobalt comes from the DRC alone, and that diaspora talent and advice are assets as valuable as any financial contribution.

The Capital for Impact panel surfaced two persistent tensions. The first is the Silicon Valley trap — measuring African business success through unicorn valuations while ignoring the vast invisible economy sustaining African communities for generations. Sid Mofya of MOTIF 54 put it plainly: **the invisible part of Africa's economy is where the real infrastructure of daily life gets built,** and art, storytelling, and cultural narrative are the mechanisms through which that economy becomes legible to capital. The second is the blended finance question. Natnael Asmerom of Launch Africa Ventures argued for the zebra approach — resilient, capital-efficient companies that deliver returns without depending on external funding cycles. Dorothy Nyambi of MEDA grounded it further: capital must land in systems that actually work. Africa does not need unicorns. It needs infrastructure companies that create jobs, anchor communities, and compound over time.

The fireside chat with Eva Ngigi of Equity Bank and Tamara Maxwell of the Export-Import Bank demonstrated that mission-aligned finance and commercial scale are not in conflict — Equity Bank waived traditional account requirements, grew to 23 million customers, and now processes 60% of diaspora network transfers. In the co-creation breakout, Joe Kinvi of Borderless and Jason Enlow of Liberty Bank discussed how fintechs like Paystack and Flutterwave have already re-architected money movement across the continent, and what it would take to move diaspora capital directly — not through U.S. intermediaries, but onto the continent itself. **The shift Africa needs is not from financial access to financial inclusion. It is from financial access to financial systems transformation.**

Stats / Figures

\$109
BILLION

In 2024, over \$109 billion flowed into Africa in remittances — approximately twice the level of overseas development assistance — yet around 75% goes directly to consumption. (*World Bank, via RemitScope, 2024*)

\$200
BILLION

The African diaspora in the United States alone generates over \$200 billion in revenue and supports more than 1.3 million jobs domestically. (Todd McDonald, Liberty Bank, ADIS26)

5.9%
vs.
9.9%

The cost of sending money to Africa ranges from 5.9% in West Africa to 9.9% in East Africa — far above the UN SDG target of 3% by 2030. (*RemitScope / World Bank, Q1 2025*)

Capital For Impact (Cont.)

Channeling Diaspora Wealth Into Africa's Financial Future



Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- » **Be intentional with your deposits.** Placing funds in mission-aligned institutions — African-owned banks, CDFIs, diaspora-focused vehicles — is an act of investment, not just banking.
- » **Reduce remittance transfer costs to the 3% SDG target.** Costs of up to 9.9% drain billions annually. Governments and regulators on both sides must accelerate the fintech and policy conditions that bring costs down.
- » **Create diaspora investment instruments beyond remittances.** African governments should develop structured diaspora bonds and tax-advantaged investment accounts — their absence is significant.
- » **Build 501(c)(3) equivalents on the continent** to unlock domestic diaspora philanthropy and correct the tax asymmetry that currently channels all giving through US intermediaries.
- » **Require U.S. banks to serve diaspora-linked businesses** rather than de-risking them out of the financial system.
- » **Champion open, accessible investment platforms** that allow non-accredited diaspora members to participate in African-focused funds currently restricted to wealthy investors.
- » **Move beyond the unicorn model.** Investors must be educated on the zebra framework — resilient, community-rooted companies that grow steadily and serve as the backbone of African economies.

Reports & Further Reading

- [RemitScope Africa — Remittance Data Dashboard](#) — World Bank / IFAD
- [Remittances as Development Finance: Africa's Overlooked Billions](#) — ISS Africa, 2025
- [Africa Can Leverage Remittances for Growth Through Fintech](#) — African Business, 2026
- [Diaspora Remittances to Africa: A \\$100 Billion Opportunity](#) — Afridigest, 2025

Partners Involved

Liberty Bank | Metalex Commodities | MOTIF 54 | MEDA | Launch Africa Ventures | Luma Learn AI | Equity Bank | Export-Import Bank of the United States | Myriad USA · Borderless | Jedar Capital | Embassy of Ethiopia



*"Include Africa in your portfolio allocation."
— Ayo Sopitan, Founder & CEO, Metalex Commodities*

*"Innovation in Africa comes from a place of necessity, not privilege."
— Natnael Asmerom, Investment Manager, Launch Africa Ventures*

*"The invisible part of Africa's economy is the part we need to pay the most attention to."
— Sid Mofya, Founder, MOTIF 54*

*"One intentional connection can unlock generational impact."
— Todd McDonald, President, Liberty Bank*

*"Africa deserves anything bigger than what the world has ever seen."
— Ambassador Binalf Andualem Ashenef, Embassy of Ethiopia*



Education & Talent Development

The Future of Work Remains African



Overview

Africa is home to the world's fastest-growing and youngest workforce — its greatest asset and most urgent challenge simultaneously. With 532 million young people aged 15 to 35, the systems designed to prepare and support them have not kept pace. ADIS26's Future of Work sessions refused crisis-based framing and chose instead the language of architecture: what does Africa need to build, and how does the diaspora help build it? The answer was consistent across every session — the gap is not talent, it is the opportunity structure and availability of dignified jobs and wages. Closing it requires the diaspora to show up not just as donors, but as mentors, connectors, ecosystem investors, and storytellers. With AI reshaping the global skills landscape faster than most education systems can respond, and only 3 million formal jobs created annually against 10 to 12 million new entrants to the job market each year, the diaspora's moment to act is now.

Opportunity Architecture: Building the Systems Africa's Talent Deserves

LaTanya Mapp, who has spent 25 years working across Africa, opened with a reframe that set the tone for everything that followed: the future of work in Africa has always been African — what has been missing is the wealth. **“The future of wealth is African.”** That, she argued, is the frame driving diaspora engagement with talent. Cheick Camara of ServiceNow Africa made the hiring reality concrete: his team received 8,000 resumes and hired zero — not because talent was absent, but because preparation was. The deficit is not ambition or intelligence; it is soft skills, self-promotion, and the ability to navigate corporate environments not designed with African professionals in mind. The diaspora, having navigated exactly these environments, is the most natural teacher.

Anupam Awasthi of Catalyst settled the AI debate quickly: **“To AI or not to AI is not the question anymore.”** The question is whether Africa's young people will use it to solve African problems or merely consume solutions built for others. Kofi Ampadu reframed what AI means for skills: with information retrieval automated, the premium moves decisively toward problem-solving and communication. Everyone becomes a manager of agents. Africa's youth, raised in contexts of necessity and resourcefulness, are not ill-suited for that future. They are already living it.

The breakout and co-creation sessions pushed toward specificity. Magdi Amin of African Renaissance Ventures argued that coding is a small part of what makes technology ventures succeed — business leadership, storytelling, and the ability to translate data into decisions are the real differentiators, and those are exactly what structured mentorship provides. Lamine Savadogo called for a digital library accessible across all 54 countries. Jay Veal of BrightMatch.ai grounded the conversation in a reality the room recognized: the path from education to career is no longer linear, and for founders of color, AI is both accelerating the opportunity and raising the bar. **The diaspora's role is to build the holistic circle of support — mentorship, networks, backing, and visibility — that the market alone will not provide.**

Stats / Figures

532
MILLION

Africa is home to 532 million young people aged 15 to 35, more than 22% of the global youth cohort. (Mastercard Foundation / World Data Lab, [Africa Youth Employment Outlook 2026](#))

3M vs. **10-12M**

Only 3 million formal jobs are created annually across Africa while 10 to 12 million young people enter the job market each year. ([African Development Bank](#))

80% vs. **9.9%**

80% of African companies say AI skills are a priority, yet the skills gap is widening faster than training programs can close it. (Magdi Amin, ADIS26)

Education & Talent Development (Cont.)

The Future of Work Remains African

Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- » **Brain drain is over. Brain circulation is the frame.** The diaspora's job is to support the building of the conditions that make contributing and leading from the continent a viable and attractive choice.
- » **Invest in ecosystems, not just individuals.** Shift philanthropy and diaspora investment toward vocational training networks, mentorship platforms, and apprenticeship pipelines that compound over time.
- » **Soft skills are the missing link.** Communication, self-promotion, and adaptability are as critical as technical skills and the diaspora is uniquely positioned to share this knowledge via structured mentorship.
- » **Establish digital learning libraries across all 54 countries** — multilingual, curated, and accessible regardless of geography.
- » **Improve mentorship and apprenticeship models** with tax incentives, visa facilitation, or formal partnership agreements that make sustained engagement structurally easier for diaspora mentors. Diasporans should partner with African schools and businesses to place talented young people into meaningful employment pathways, instead of unpaid internship cycles.
- » **Channel critical minerals wealth into workforce development.** Resource contracts should require local workforce training, vocational investment, and technology transfer as standard conditions.
- » **Fund ecosystem-level workforce infrastructure**, not individual scholarships — vocational training.

Reports & Further Reading

- [A Ladder of Opportunity: Unlocking Jobs for Today's African Youth](#) — World Bank, 2025
- [Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024: Sub-Saharan Africa](#) — International Labour Organization
- [Exploitation of Africa Data Workers and How to Fight It](#) — The Conversation

Partners Involved

Santa Clara University / Miller Center | Stanford Seed | Academic City University | Culture Seekers LLC | Catalyst | African Renaissance Ventures Marison Energy System | ServiceNow Africa INC Education / BrightMatch.ai | EY | HP



"It is not brain drain anymore — young people are going to be wherever they can find the wealth they need to survive and make the world better." — LaTanya Mapp, Managing Partner, Culture Seekers LLC

"To AI or not to AI is not the question anymore. AI is the foundation of future computation." — Anupam Awasthi, Founder & CEO, Catalyst

"You have to move people from a survival mode to a thriving mode." — Kofi Ampadu, Investor & Advisor

"The gap between potential and preparation is the defining workforce challenge — and our biggest opportunity." — Magdi Amin, Managing Partner, African Renaissance Ventures



AI For Africa's Future

Building Ethical, Inclusive, and Locally Grounded Solutions



Overview

Africa is not behind in AI. It is building differently — from necessity rather than privilege — and that distinction matters. The AI for Africa's Future sessions drew technologists, health researchers, educators, investors, and policy advocates into a frank conversation about what equitable AI adoption actually looks like on the continent. The central question was not whether Africa will participate in the AI revolution, but whether it will shape it or simply consume it. The window to answer that question decisively is open right now. The decisions being made today about data governance, infrastructure investment, and model development will determine whether the continent becomes an architect or a consumer of the most consequential technology of our generation. As global AI investment accelerates and regulatory frameworks crystallize elsewhere, the diaspora's moment to act — as investors, advocates, and builders — is now.

Africa Is Not Behind. It Is Building Differently.

Africa's relationship with AI begins with a representation problem that has real human consequences. The datasets powering the world's most widely used AI systems were built for and trained on roughly 20% of the world's population — and Africa is largely absent. Cristella Mombe-Zigah of Cisco made it concrete: when you prompt a large language model to generate an image of a doctor, it defaults to a white male. When she built Style My Crown, her virtual hair try-on platform, she found AI libraries with virtually no representation of Black hair. Her response was to build the bias identification and mitigation tools herself. **That instinct — build what you need rather than wait — defined the tone of ADIS26's AI sessions throughout.**

Dr. Tiffany J. Bright of Cedars-Sinai made the healthcare stakes clear: clinical AI tools validated on urban, academic populations are routinely deployed in rural African communities where they perform poorly or cause harm. The communities that need AI-enabled healthcare most are the ones least represented in the training data. John Kamara, who trains engineers in AI ethics across East Africa, brought the capital question into focus: **the diaspora cannot cheer from the sidelines and expect African AI ventures to compete globally.** Capital formation for African AI must be anchored by African enterprise organizations — banks, telecoms, large employers — who are both the most logical investors and the ultimate consumers of the products being built. Rwanda's AI venture studio, backed by a major bank and designed to grow young companies before opening to outside capital, is a replicable model.

The sessions closed on the leapfrog opportunity with genuine urgency. Africa has done this before: mobile money bypassed the entire traditional banking infrastructure that constrained financial inclusion elsewhere. Voice-first AI in local languages can remove the literacy barrier for billions. Agentic AI can tackle supply chain complexity, cross-border trade under AfCFTA, and personalized healthcare delivery at scale. **The window is open. The diaspora's role is to contribute as co-architects — not spectators.**

Stats / Figures

\$4.5B
→
\$16.5B

Africa's AI market is projected to grow from USD 4.5 billion in 2025 to USD 16.5 billion by 2030, at a 27% annual growth rate. (Statista 2025, via [Mastercard](#))

<\$2
hour

Built by Africa. Rarely for Africa." African data workers earn less than \$2/hour labeling the content that trains the world's most powerful AI tools — with no guarantee those tools will ever reflect or serve their communities in return. ([The Conversation / OECD AI Policy Observatory, 2024–2025](#))

230
MILLION

AI is projected to create up to 230 million digital jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 — but only if the talent, infrastructure, and governance frameworks are built in time. (Mastercard 2025 via [FinTechNews](#))

AI For Africa's Future (Cont.)

Building Ethical, Inclusive, and Locally Grounded Solutions



Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- » **Invest, don't just advise.** Diaspora participation in African AI must include capital. African enterprise organizations must be anchor investors, not afterthoughts.
- » **Validate before you deploy.** Every AI tool for African populations must be validated with those populations first — the assumption of transferability is harmful.
- » **Center community consent in data governance.** National frameworks should enshrine informed consent, transparent data disclosure, and clear community benefit requirements for government AI contracts.
- » **Data centers should reflect African realities.** African governments and innovators should consider building smaller data centers and servers ("suitcase servers") rather than simply replicating infrastructure found elsewhere.
- » **Invest in African-language AI infrastructure.** Dedicated investment in African-language datasets and models is the foundation of any claim to inclusive AI on the continent.
- » **Champion open-source AI as policy.** Open-source frameworks decentralize knowledge and enable African developers to contribute to global model-building, not just consume it.
- » **Data monetization is overdue.** African communities generate enormous data and currently surrender it to foreign platforms without capturing its value. That must change.

Reports & Further Reading

- [Harnessing the Transformative Power of AI in Africa](#) — Mastercard, 2025
- [Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy](#) — African Union, 2024
- [AI for Development \(AI4D\) Africa](#) — IDRC / FCDO
- [AfricaNLP 2025 Workshop Proceedings](#) — Association for Computational Linguistics
- [AI Horizons: Africa — Meridian Roundtable Discussion](#) — Meridian, April 2026

Partners Involved

Mozilla Foundation | Cedars-Sinai / Center for AI Research and Education | AI Center of Excellence Africa | Cisco | Style My Crown | Sproxil | Global Partnership for Education | EY

"The misconception is that Africa is late in the AI revolution — but we need to remember the first people doing data annotation were from Africa, from Kenya." — Cristella Mombe-Zigah, Cisco / Style My Crown

"You always have to make sure that you are using the right dataset and that your tool works for the population — always make sure it is validated." — Dr. Tiffany J. Bright, Cedars-Sinai Center for AI Research and Education

"The decentralization of knowledge is our biggest asset today. Knowledge is everywhere." — John Kamara, Founder, AI Center of Excellence Africa

"It is not that we do not have talent in Africa — it is about what we give them before they go to the job market." — John Kamara, Founder, AI Center of Excellence Africa

Policy in Action

Diaspora Influence From Momentum to Mobilization



Overview

Policy shapes everything — who gets capital, who gets care, who gets heard, and who gets left out. The ADIS26 Policy in Action sessions brought together advocates, technologists, government relations leaders, and diaspora organizers around a central question: in a rapidly shifting political landscape on both sides of the Atlantic, how does the diaspora convert its moral authority and lived experience into concrete, durable policy influence? The answer was not a single playbook but a set of principles: frame the argument around mutual benefit; organize collectively; engage strategically across institutions; and build durable structures for diaspora influence. Within Africa, the AU's Agenda 2063 commits to integrating diaspora communities into the democratic processes of all 54 member states by 2030 — yet fewer than half of African governments have enacted the policies to make that real. Externally, U.S. development assistance is contracting. Both trends lead to the same conclusion: the diaspora must stop waiting to be included in the rooms where policy is made and start building the infrastructure to walk in.

The Diaspora Has Power. The Question Is Whether It Organizes.

The Policy in Action conversation opened at the ADIS26 private dinner with a keynote from Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman of Nigeria's NiDCOM. Her presence set the tone: a government official whose entire mandate rests on the conviction that diaspora communities are not simply remittance senders, but investors, innovators, and bridge-builders. **Nigeria's diaspora — the largest on the continent — is a model for what structured engagement achieves when government, private sector, and civil society align.** Her call was direct: leverage diaspora commissions as strategic partners, engage governments to co-create enabling environments, and move from goodwill to measurable, structured investment partnerships.

The subsequent panel opened with Motaz Attalla of the Gates Foundation naming the shift clearly: U.S.-Africa relations are now defined by commercial diplomacy and a transactional logic emphasizing African self-reliance. The arguments that moved policy a decade ago are no longer sufficient. Elizabeth Hoffman of the ONE Campaign put the contradiction plainly: the voices of people receiving life-saving medicine are not being heard in Washington. **The diaspora holds a unique ability to channel community-level realities into policy spaces — and that ability is more urgently needed now than at any previous moment.** Ayla Francis Foster of Humanity United brought two decades of experience to bear: congressional offices pick up the phone when constituents call. Diaspora communities have genuine political influence — as voters, taxpayers, and business owners — and it is consistently underused.

Cheick Camara of ServiceNow added the technology dimension: nearly 80% of African countries have data residency policies and 25% have AI policies in development — yet the technical expertise to implement them is largely absent from the continent. The co-design session closed on a call for structure: the diaspora must move from informal engagement to formal, inclusive organizations capable of channeling diaspora input into policy systematically. As one student in the room put it directly — **we follow policies instead of shaping them, and that must change.**

Stats / Figures

< half The AU's Agenda 2063 envisions diaspora integration into the democratic processes of all 54 African nations by 2030 — yet fewer than half of African countries have adopted formal diaspora engagement policies to date. ([EU Diaspora for Development](#) / AU Agenda 2063)

7.73% Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most expensive region in the world for sending remittances, with average costs of 7.73% to send \$200 — nearly three times the UN SDG target of 3%. (World Bank, via 119th [US Congress](#))

\$2.5 BILLION The 2025 US-Africa Business Summit committed \$2.5 billion to advance trade and commercial engagement — signaling that commercial diplomacy, not development aid, is the new frame for US-Africa relations. ([US-Africa Business Summit, 2025](#))

Policy in Action (Cont.)

Diaspora Influence From Momentum to Mobilization



Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- » **Reframe the advocacy argument.** Lead with mutual benefit — trade, technology, strategic minerals, market access — while ensuring community voices are embedded in every commercial conversation.
- » **Urgently reauthorize and modernize AGOA** before it expires in December 2026, including a long-term extension, updated rules of origin aligned with AfCFTA, and streamlined implementation.
- » **Leverage commercial diplomacy as an advocacy lever.** Diaspora advocates must engage directly with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Development Finance Corporation, and Exim Bank to ensure diaspora-linked businesses, African SMEs, and affected communities are included in the deals being structured.
- » **Institutionalize diaspora engagement at the national level.** Countries could learn from NiDCOM's model — diaspora organizations should be strategic co-creators of policy, not passive recipients.
- » **Build Africa-led policy frameworks.** Defaulting to European GDPR and other similar policies, creates a sovereignty gap. Continental African frameworks must reflect African realities and innovation ecosystems.
- » **Embed diaspora technologists in African policy processes** through fellowships, advisory roles, and secondments — bringing expertise into the rooms where digital and AI frameworks are being written.
- » **Create formal and inclusive diaspora policy structures across all 54 countries**, in line with AU Agenda 2063, so that broad-based diaspora participation in governance becomes the norm, not the exception.

Reports & Further Reading

- [African Diaspora Council Act](#) — H.R.784 — 119th US Congress
- [Priorities for the New US Administration on Strengthening Economic Relations with Africa](#) — Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024
- [Africa Diaspora & Civil Society Engagement — AU Agenda 2063](#) — EU Diaspora for Development / African Union
- [Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Toolkit](#) — African Union

Partners Involved

NiDCOM · Gates Foundation · The ONE Campaign · ServiceNow Africa · Humanity United · Presidential Precinct · Jedar Capital |



“We can’t do all these innovations without policies that support them.” — LaTanya Mapp, ADIS26

“We need to think about how we come together as a diaspora, share our identity, and understand our roles before moving forward.” — Audience participant, ADIS26 Co-Design Session

“How do we leverage technology to improve the lives of people, bring more money to the country, and create more jobs? Because technology for the sake of technology does not help anybody.” — Cheick Camara, VP & Managing Director, ServiceNow Africa



Partnerships for Africa

Mobilizing Talent and Resources for Impact



Overview

No single organization, investor, or diaspora member can solve the challenges facing Africa alone — and one of the most profound things said at ADIS26 may have been the simplest: Africa cannot afford to be transactional. The Partnerships for Africa sessions examined what genuine partnership looks like in practice — not the short-term, project-based collaborations that dominate development finance, but the sustained, vision-aligned, cross-sector alliances that actually move systems. The diaspora's greatest untapped power is not financial capital alone, but its ability to carry trust, cultural fluency, networks, and narrative across worlds — and build something neither could build alone. Global development assistance is contracting, and the partnerships that once carried it are under strain. Diaspora networks are simultaneously more connected, resourced, and motivated than at any previous moment. The infrastructure for partnership now exists. What is required is the will to move from conversation to commitment.

Trust Is the Infrastructure: What Real Partnership Looks Like

British Robinson of the Milken Institute named what many in the room had felt but rarely said aloud: the tension between wanting to invest in Africa and the real financial pressures of diaspora life — retirement savings, mortgages, children's education. **“How do we invest in Africa while investing in ourselves?”** That question is not a contradiction — it is the starting point for designing investment products that actually work for the diaspora. Her challenge to financial institutions was direct: build better vehicles. Africa cannot grant its way to success.

Richard Kiplagat of Africa Practice brought economic precision: Africa pays \$4.2 billion annually in avoidable borrowing costs not because of actual risk, but because of how global media frames the continent. **Narrative is not soft — it is structural.** It shapes bond yields and the cost of capital for every government and entrepreneur on the continent. The diaspora, sitting at the intersection of African identity and global credibility, is uniquely positioned to shift that narrative through rigorous, data-backed storytelling that makes Africa's actual risk profile legible to global investors.

Rossina Naldoo of Bridgespan named the central structural failure precisely: most partnerships are designed for the short term and are project-based, while systems change requires long-term commitment and cross-sector coordination. **Successful partnerships are not aligned on activities — they are aligned on vision.** Thelma Ekiyor of Women for Women International closed with a clear argument: poverty in Africa has a woman's face, and any partnership that does not center women is managing symptoms, not systems. Every good investor is a gender-lens investor. Forget perfection. The only thing you cannot do is stand on the sidelines.

Stats / Figures

4.2
BILLION

African nations pay up to \$4.2 billion annually in avoidable interest costs on sovereign debt — a direct consequence of negative media bias inflating perceived risk. This is the “prejudice premium” — and diaspora storytelling is one of the most powerful levers to reduce it. ([Africa Practice / Africa No Filter, 2024](#))

90%

Women in Africa reinvest up to 90% of their income into the education, health, and nutrition of their families and communities, compared to 40% for men — making gender-lens investment the highest-returning partnership strategy on the continent. ([African Development Bank, via Project Syndicate, 2024](#))

\$24.1
MILLION

Africa's intra-continental diaspora includes 24.1 million people who are digitally engaged and already transacting across colonial borders — an untapped investment network hiding in plain sight. ([Africa Practice / Richard Kiplagat, ADIS26](#))

Reports & Further Reading

- [Investing in African Women Will Yield Outsize Returns](#) — Project Syndicate / Dolika Banda, 2024
- [Financing Her Future: Gender-Lens Investing Is Transforming Africa's Capital Markets](#) — Further Africa, 2025
- [ADIS26 Publications](#) — Bridgespan, Africa Practice & ADN

Partnerships for Africa (Cont.)

Mobilizing Talent and Resources for Impact



Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- » **Partnerships must be vision-aligned**, not activity-aligned. Long-term, cross-sector alliances with shared goals and shared accountability are the only structures capable of achieving systems change.
- » **Narrative is a financial instrument.** Reducing Africa's \$4.2 billion prejudice premium requires African-led credit rating mechanisms and sustained diaspora storytelling — rigorous, data-backed, and amplified.
- » **Gender-lens investment is not optional, it is optimal.** Any partnership, fund, or program that does not actively include women as leaders, beneficiaries, and decision-makers is leaving the highest-returning investment on the table. Women reinvest 90% of income into their communities. That is the multiplier effect.
- » **Establish formal diaspora partnership registries** at the AU and national government level — searchable, verified, and matched to specific institutional needs.
- » **Fund long-term systems change.** Grant-making and investment timelines must match the actual pace of systems change — multi-year, flexible, and outcome-focused.
- » **Champion intra-African diaspora investment frameworks.** Governments and regional bodies should build the regulatory infrastructure to formalize and scale investment among the 24.1 million digitally engaged Africans transacting across colonial borders. This is a foundation for unlocking a largely invisible but powerful partnership and investment network.
- » **Expand 501(c)(3) equivalent structures** for cross-border diaspora giving in other diaspora hub countries beyond the US.



“When you have a partnership, make sure you are unlocking something that no single person could achieve alone.” — Rossina Naladoo, Manager, Bridgespan Africa

“The only thing you cannot do is stand on the sidelines.” — Thelma Ekiyor, International CEO, Women for Women International

“It's time for Africa to invest in Africa.” — British Robinson, Chair for Africa, Milken Institute

“Diaspora networks can bring trust, engagement, and participation.” — Rossina Naladoo, Manager, Bridgespan Africa

“Because poverty in Africa has a woman's face — and for as long as you don't address the feminization of poverty in Africa, you're not talking about systemic issues.” — Thelma Ekiyor, International CEO, Women for Women International



Partners Involved

Milken Institute | Africa Practice |
Bridgespan Africa | Women for Women
International | Myriad USA | Liberty Bank



“We can use storytelling to proudly tell our stories. We are in a unique time when the cost of telling the story is getting reduced to the lowest it’s ever been; we have an opportunity to tell more of the stories and use platforms like this to get everybody else telling those stories.”

— Sid Mofya: Founder, MOTIF 54

Get Involved

The conversations at ADIS26 did not end with the symposium. They are becoming partnerships, investments, and initiatives — and there is room for you in all that comes next.

Early momentum is already visible. During the GC-ADEA workshop, participants began shaping a \$1 billion vision for Africa-led scientific research and development. A commitment was made to match funds raised through the African Diaspora Innovation Fund, doubling its impact. One founder left with an investment commitment of up to \$100,000. A new collaboration is expanding AI education across the continent via WhatsApp. A centralized African Diaspora Knowledge Hub is in development. Corporate partnerships are already connecting entrepreneurs with mentorship and technical expertise. We are only just getting started.

You do not need to be a venture capitalist, a scientist, or a policymaker to be part of this; there are many ways you can actively participate



GIVE — AND GIVE INTENTIONALLY

- » Move a portion of your savings or operational funds to a mission-aligned institution. Where you bank is a decision with consequences.
- » Contribute to the [African Diaspora Innovation Fund \(AfDIF\) — starting at \\$500 or less, or \\$42](#) a month to have a say in chosen ventures. These contributions directly fund social entrepreneurs in Africa and the diaspora.
- » Support ADN's unrestricted programs so the infrastructure that makes all of this possible keeps running. [Donate here.](#)



INVEST IN PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

- » In every deal, ask: who else in the diaspora can be part of this venture?
- » Support an African student or young professional with professional development — not just tuition. Help them build the networks and confidence that turn talent into opportunity.
- » Follow, fund, and amplify the work of organizations featured in this white paper. Their work is the proof of concept. Your support makes it scalable.



MENTOR AND CONNECT

- » Mentor or coach an entrepreneur through ADN's programs — ABE for U.S.-based founders, BAF for Africa-based founders. Express your interest [here](#).
- » If you work in science, health, or R&D, plug into the [GC-ADEA](#) — where diaspora expertise is matched directly with African researchers and biotech ventures.
- » Reach out to one person working in a sector covered in this white paper. One intentional introduction can unlock generational impact.



USE YOUR VOICE

- » Tell better stories about Africa — at work, in your community, on social media, at your dinner table. Every accurate, hopeful, and honest story chips away at the \$4.2 billion prejudice premium.
- » If you live in the U.S., call your Members of Congress and ask where they stand on the reauthorization of AGOA and other policies that matter to you. Congressional offices respond to constituents. You are one.
- » If you work inside a corporation, university, hospital, or research institution — ask whether Africa shows up in your organization's investment plans, trial protocols, or AI validation datasets. If it does not, say something.

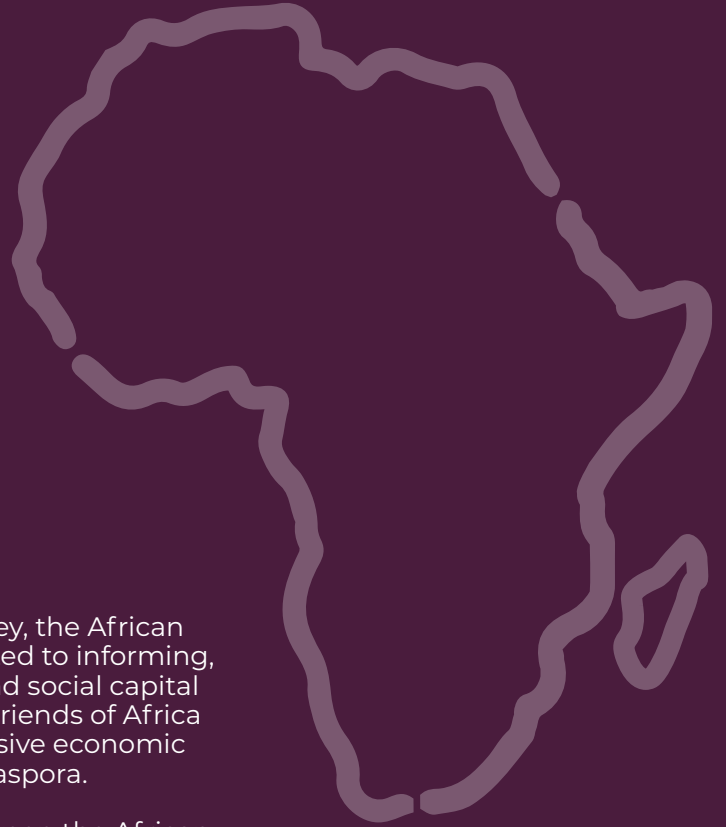


STAY CONNECTED

- » [Attend upcoming ADN events](#) — virtual and in-person.
- » [Sign up for the ADN newsletter](#) to stay updated on opportunities and milestones between now and ADIS27.
- » [Partner with ADN](#) on programs or convenings, or explore becoming an [ecosystem partner](#).

The future we are building is not waiting for a perfect moment or a perfect policy. It is being built right now — in the deals being signed, the students being mentored, the drugs being developed, and the stories being told. ADIS27 is on the African continent. **Let us arrive there having done the work.**

About ADN



Established in 2010 and headquartered in Silicon Valley, the African Diaspora Network (ADN) is a global nonprofit dedicated to informing, engaging and activating the intellectual, financial, and social capital of Africans, diaspora and descendants of Africa, and friends of Africa to accelerate entrepreneurship, innovation, and inclusive economic growth across the African continent and its global diaspora.

For over 15 years, ADN has served as the conduit between the African diaspora and the continent, building relationships, platforms, and programs for collective impact.

Our first-mover advantage establishes us as a trusted network bringing together Africa-focused entrepreneurs, investors, academics, government, nonprofit organizations, and corporations.



STAY CONNECTED

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