

African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022

January ADIS 2022: The State of Africa in Healthcare Access

January 26 Session Summary- Highlights - Action Steps

The State of Africa in
Healthcare Access

Jan 26, 2022 / Wednesday
8AM PST, 11AM EST, 4PM GMT, 5PM CET

 **ADIS22**
African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022
The Premium Convening of the African Investment Ecosystem in Silicon Valley



JOSH GHAIM, PH.D.
FOUNDER AND MANAGING PARTNER,
IGNITEGB INC., CO-FOUNDER & CEO,
SMALL WORLD BRANDS INC
MODERATOR



DR. DEEPA MAHARAJ
AFRICA SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS
HEAD, SANOFI CONSUMER
HEALTHCARE



DR. DUMANI KULA
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
AFRICA, EVERCARE GROUP



JOY NCOMILE RUWODO
SENIOR DIRECTOR,
PUBLIC AFFAIRS, END FUND

Register @ bit.ly/janadis22

Context:

On January 26, African Diaspora Network (ADN) hosted the first virtual webinar of the African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022, "January 2022: The State of Africa in Healthcare Access."

The future of healthcare in Africa doesn't look like what we see today. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on the global shortage of healthcare workers at all levels. Across Africa, overburdened healthcare systems are drowning with the demands of the pandemic while attempting to address non-pandemic patients with limited budgets and inefficient systems. Prior to the pandemic, a person between 30 and 70 years old in Africa had a 1 in 5 chance of dying from a major chronic illness, such as cancer, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease. This number is expected to rapidly increase.

At the same time, telehealth technologies developed by Africans to diagnose, treat, and monitor health conditions remotely are leapfrogging traditional systems of healthcare and enabling new, exciting collaborations to deliver quality digitized healthcare services wherever they may be. The transition to telehealth provides an opportunity to transform African healthcare systems. How are existing healthcare providers adapting their services to the COVID environment? What challenges and opportunities are there in accelerating telehealth? What foundations are needed to fully and effectively implement telehealth services?



ADIS22 January began with an uplifting performance by Zimbabwean-born, multi-talented singer, Piwai. She featured songs including 'Child of the Soil' and 'Malaika' playing the Mbira, an African thumb piano.

After Piwai's performance, Almaz Negash, founder and

executive director of ADN, welcomed the audience and recapped how, since the pandemic, ADN has been able to pivot quickly to virtual convenings. Although ADN regrets not being able to see everyone in person, the virtual convenings do allow us to reach many more people. For January ADIS22 alone, people from 38 different countries registered, including Barbados, Somalia, and Sweden to name a few. This large representation depicts the interest of the global diaspora in work happening in Africa. ADN will continue to convene together Africans, diasporans, and friends of Africa especially in areas of our strategic direction: healthcare, connectivity, finance, and education.



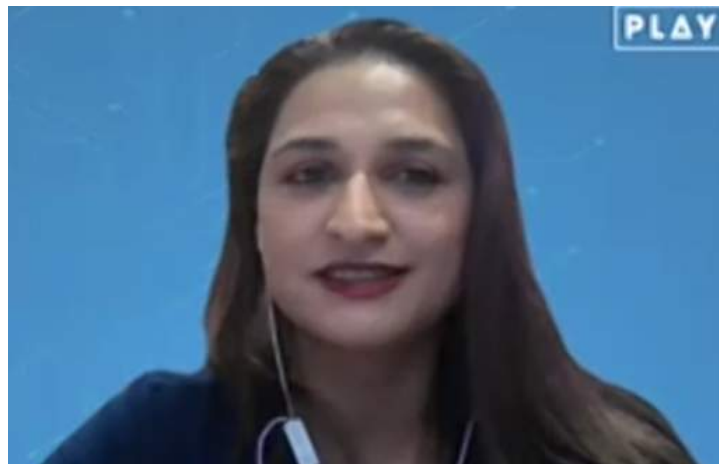
Next, Almaz introduced the panel session moderator, Josh Ghaim, PhD, CEO of Small World Brands, Co-Founder of Ignite Venture Studio, and former CTO of Johnson & Johnson. Josh opened the session by saying, "Regardless of country, we are almost all facing the same healthcare issue. Who thought that those living in the United States would be facing issues in terms of the whole healthcare system being overburdened? When you see this happening in the U.S., Europe, and other parts of the world, can you imagine what's happening in Africa also in terms of the challenges that exist and the constraint this disease



is bringing? More importantly, the biggest concern that continues to happen is that as everyone is focused on COVID, are we missing all the progress that is made with so many other diseases?"

Josh asked the panel to describe the healthcare system in Africa today. Dr. Dumani Kula, Chief Operating Officer of Africa, evercare, responded, "Omicron

was identified by African experts. My general impression is that on the African continent for various reasons, populations have been relatively spared. We must credit the leadership on the continent for reacting quickly and the time we had because COVID hit us last in a way. We had some time to adapt. By in large, African healthcare systems are very resilient through efforts from the private and public sectors working together."



Dr. Deepa Maharaj, Africa Scientific Affairs Head at Sanofi CHC, agreed with Dumani and added, "Africa really showed that we can leapfrog and embrace the digital technology. We used it to communicate and spread the message and inform and educate patients even in remote communities, through SMS and through education of community

workers. For me, Africa proved its resilience and really showed it is a continent and force

to be reckoned with. I am hoping these good practices will continue, especially with Telehealth and that we can expand into other areas like noncommunicable diseases which are rapidly on an increase and probably has not had the focus it should have had.”

Joy Ncomile Ruwodo, Senior Director of Public Affairs at the END Fund, said, “This is an opportunity for us to really deeply look at the issues of equity-not only in the terms of care, but also in terms of access and in terms of acknowledging everyone's contribution because the contributions were far and wide and vast. That's the kind of momentum we need to keep going in order to reach the final mile. We've got a lot of work to do but I'm encouraged because I think we have just the right people to do it.”



Josh and Almaz concluded the session by introducing [ADN's Telehealth pilot](#). The key to building the future painted by the panelists during ADIS22 January is African-led collaboration, for which ADN is known. ADN is developing a project with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to leverage technology that expands digital health access, at home or point of care diagnostics, wellness and prevention opportunities, and medicine delivery directly to consumers and patients when needed. If you are interested in learning more and receiving updates, please fill out a brief form at <https://mailchi.mp/dbd8b14a6592/adntelehealth>.

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Network with and mentor African Healthcare workers:** Diasporan healthcare professionals can help leapfrog African healthcare by offering their expertise to healthcare workers on the ground.
- **Learn more about NTDs and spread awareness:** Visit the [END Fund's website](#) to learn more.

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- **Learn more and support ADN's Telehealth pilot:** If you are interested in learning more and receiving updates, please fill out a brief form at <https://mailchi.mp/dbd8b14a6592/adntelehealth>.
 - **Register for February ADIS22:** Join us for "From E-Learning to Educational Systems Transformation" on February 23. Register @ <https://bit.ly/febadis22>.

Highlights

- Health systems are resilient in part because of collaboration efforts between the private sector and public sectors.
- Africa has embraced the use of technology in the healthcare sector for treatment as well as spreading communication on disease prevention.
- There is still work to be done in Africa and worldwide to address inequities in healthcare access.
- Many governments have relaxed regulations to allow for more e-commerce from the comfort of home. Thus e-consults are becoming the norm rather than traditional visits.
- In remote areas, issues of Internet connectivity make it almost impossible to do live video consultations.
- A major way to reduce healthcare costs is to train as many people as possible - doctors and healthcare professionals to address the basics of healthcare.
- Community healthcare workers and volunteers are an important arm in delivering health services. We need to elevate, promote, and train them.
- For Telehealth to succeed, there needs to be a regulatory and policy framework. There also needs to be sustainable funding available to see telehealth projects through.
- Education and credible information is vital to healthcare success.

See the entire session recording [here](#).

Resources:

Click [here](#) to learn more about the African Diaspora Investment Symposium and upcoming sessions.

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

- [Small World Brands](#)
- [Ignite Venture Studio](#)
- [Evercare](#)
- [Sanofi](#)
- [END Fund](#)
- Session recording:
<https://youtu.be/f3UtRCvtYi4>

Chat Recap:

ESTHER MGBEIKE: www.grace-pediatric.com Am looking to partner with anyone to duplicate the healthcare services in Nigeria and other African nation because our people deserve better. Link me at Esther Mgbeike CEO

Cedric Tsiga: Mpataji Health is a two-sided platform that connects patients with specialist physicians, medical and healthcare enthusiasts, who are disrupting access to healthcare in Africa. The platform shares curated health content and access to emerging health initiatives. www.mpataji.com

Michael Moscherosch: COVID created a further depletion of health workers in LMICs:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/24/health/covid-health-worker-immigration.html>

Hal Glasser: It is a bit of a vicious circle - even where there are telehealth technologies that are promising, there is a lack of seed funding for pilot programs. Where do small enterprises that cannot access Gates level funding look? Can the diaspora help?

Nancy Reynolds: One area it would be interesting to hear about is how to strengthen health systems, especially in rural, low resource settings, to allow for the introduction, effective implementation, and monitoring of telehealth? How do we build the system out to ensure telehealth's success?

Jack Higgins: Hello from Jack Higgins, MD in Los Altos, California. At the nonprofit Global Telehealth Network (GTN), we believe that health care is a human right, and that no one should be denied access to health care because of location or ability to pay. Our volunteer physicians, including doctors in the diasporas of each country, can reduce health disparities by offering free online consultations for doctors and nurses located “on the ground” in underserved areas. Pilot projects are now launching in Kenya and Uganda, with plans to scale across Africa and other continents. We’re eager to collaborate! I’m on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jackhigginsmd>. Our current collaboration involves IEEE Smart Village (which installs solar power systems and provides Internet connectivity in off-grid areas) and multiple Rotary Clubs in Africa and North America (which provide connections, mentoring and fundraising skills).

Stephanie Heckman: thank you ADN for bringing us together for this important conversation. really appreciate the panelists' insights - Stephanie www.equalizehealth.org

PAMELA SOFOLA: Hello I am the Director of Development of Foundation for Special Surgery, a non-profit organization based in the US and we are building a world class specialty hospital in Ghana comprised of Doctors from Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Mayo Clinic and other top institutions in the US. The intention is to build capacity on the ground. These top doctors are going to train local doctors on the ground. We plan on duplicating this institution across the continent. You can view our website at www.foundationforspecialsurgery.org We are doing great things to save lives!

Almaz Negash: The African Diaspora is the largest investor in Africa: \$45billion or more per year goes to the continent. We contribute more to the Continent than any aide agency and/or FDI. Moreover, we SAVE when we can and let us use our intellectual, financial, and other resources to support Africans.

Ismail Badjie: Access to capital is holding a lot of African Healthcare Startup companies back and the diaspora can play a critical role in filling the gap. Traditional VC firms tend not to relate to pain points on the continent and the continent’s opportunity is not as enticing. We have been running a startup company Innovarx Global Health that we piloted in the Gambia. We use a U.S style community Pharmacy as the cornerstone of a cyclical integrated health ecosystem designed to leverage technologies such as telemedicine, point-of-care diagnostics, electronic prescription processing, retail e-commerce and last-mile delivery of quality healthcare products and services in the most convenient way. A model rooted in continuity of care and preventative health services that not only increase access and affordability in the local market but has also expanded the market to include citizens living abroad who sponsor the care of loved ones in Africa. We would love to

connect with any interested party.

<https://www.linkedin.com/mwlite/company/innovarx-global-health>

wilfred njagi: Very valid point on last mile delivery of care. We recently launched a call for innovations to support Front Line Healthcare Workers >

<https://villgroafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Jnj-Call.pdf>

Amanuel Alemu: We are invested in a digital healthcare startup in Ethiopia that is looking to bring EMR and other digital solutions for patients and healthcare providers

<https://orbithealth.co/>

Norma Bozzini: Matibabu Foundation is initiating a small telehealth project doing ultrasounds for pregnant women to help provide information and healthcare in pregnancy with the goal of reducing maternal and neonatal health care. This is being done in small villages in Siaya district.

Bryan Plummer: Hi everyone. Great topic and great discussion. My social enterprise - Signalytic - has built a hardware-enabled technology stack and approach that is centered on reliable and sustainable digital infrastructure. We do this by providing an integrated solution solving issues around connectivity, power, hardware and software. We also use a unique distributed ledger technology that is solar powered and works on GPRS connectivity to meet data security and access needs. Would be happy to connect and share more about our work in the health system in Uganda! To date we've digitized all health facilities in a district, including lower level facilities. Thanks!

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bryanplummer/>

Carl Davis: I am the new state-wide President & CEO of the California African American Chamber of Commerce and I have been committed to developing connections with African Chambers of Commerce. Anyone who can HELP make that happen will help with the COORDINATION of your Requests my name is Carl Dais Jr 408-509-2886

ARNOLD & IVAN: Hi, I'm Ivan from Enlighten Hope Ministries, Uganda. We have a six month partner program that aims at seeing step by step development of projects that will improve the health of vulnerable people through telehealth and more. Let's share ideas. Email: tushabeivan7@gmail.com. WhatsApp: +256700113911.

Cedric Tsigas: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mpataji-health/> hello@mpataji.com

PAMELA SOFOLA: check out our organization! We are doing great things and building a world class hospital in Ghana which is going to be duplicated on the continent.

<https://www.foundationforspecialsurgery.org/>

Thank You!

African Diaspora Network is grateful to the panelists for sharing their insight on African healthcare systems! Thank you to everyone who joined!

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