

African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022

February ADIS 2022: From E-Learning to Educational Systems Transformation

February 23 Session Summary- Highlights - Action Steps

From E-Learning to
Educational Systems
Transformation

Feb 23, 2022 / Wednesday
8AM PST, 11AM EST, 4PM GMT, 5PM CET




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GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
MODERATOR


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CHRISTOPHER HOSKEN
CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER, STARTUP SCHOOL

Register @ bit.ly/febadis22

Context:

On February 23, African Diaspora Network (ADN) hosted the second virtual webinar of the African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022, "February 2022: From E-Learning to Educational Systems Transformation."

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the traditional brick-and-mortar model of education, driving African countries to respond in innovative ways. School closures sparked myriad high-tech and low-cost solutions for asynchronous or hybrid approaches that help ensure the safe continuity of learning. This era marks an opportunity to reimagine the future of education in Africa that are safer and healthier school environments, integrate digital technologies, and develop and support educators and administrators.

What are the new models emerging? How is this going to change the traditional brick-and-mortar approach to education? What are the challenges and opportunities associated with readying students for a new education format? What are the challenges in incentivizing and supporting faculty for new educational realities? What role can the African diaspora and friends of Africa play in shaping Africa's education system? What can be learned globally from Africa's innovation? This session explores opportunities for educational systems transformation across the continent.



ADIS22 February began with a cheerful performance by St. Lucia native, songwriter, and steel drummer, Harry Best.

After Harry's performance, Ndeye Makalou, Senior Director - Product Strategy Leader, Global Supply Chain, Roche-Genentech and ADN Board

Member welcomed the audience and introduced ADN's work. Ndeye then introduced the panel moderator, Liesl Riddle, Vice Dean for Strategy at George Washington University.



Liesl began by introducing the panelists and noting that each offers a unique perspective from one another. Angela Owusu-Ansah, Ph.D and Djiby Anne both represent brick-and-mortar schools and Christopher Hosken represents an exclusively online school. Liesl pointed to the



value in each, "Globally the pandemic has lowered those perceived transaction costs around using technology for both teaching and learning that now opens up all kinds of new ways of thinking how to package learning and really creating lifelong learning solutions, in addition to and complementing more traditional degree-based learning as well."

Liesl passed the floor first to Angela Owusu-Ansah, Ph.D, Provost and Professor at Ashesi University, to describe Ashesi's response to COVID. Angela explained, "At Ashesi the main three challenges we had at the

onset were safety, accessibility, and wellbeing. We decided we would distill it to the simplest approach seeing as it was already too complicated. For example, with safety, knowing there was no end in sight, our first priority was to make sure we got everyone home safely. We planned group travel to make sure students had some company in the process."



For Groupe Supdeco Dakar (Senegal), safety was also a priority. Djiby Anne, Director of International Relations and the School of Languages and Communication at Groupe Supdeco Dakar (Senegal) added, "In terms of



accessibility, we had to respond very quickly. Fortunately, we were among those lucky schools that already had an online platform many years ago. In Africa, we have a population of youth that is more and more interested in technology, education, and innovation. The future of education needs to be reimaged by raising awareness among key stakeholders that education is not only classrooms and blackboards. People can learn from anywhere and anytime. Hybrid

models of education will be the new normal."

Christopher Hosken, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Startup School, an exclusively online school said, "A lot of businesses, institutions, and social entrepreneurial ventures are all trying to solve this problem in Africa which is a pipeline of great startups and



scale-ups. I think the more the merrier from a social standpoint. Like any new industry, there is always an influx of excitement, interest, energy, and capital. When you're doing work as important as education sector work, we have a mandate to support them (users and beneficiaries) for the long-term and not just a short-term profiteer view."

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Support African Innovation:** Share connections and experiences with individuals and groups in the edtech sector
- **Build Community:** Schools need the partnership of the Diaspora and friends of Africa and continued relationships with alumni
- **Invest in Education:** Consider giving beyond remittances to support Africa-led schools and education platforms
- **Register for March ADIS22:** Join us for "Changing the Landscape of Agriculture in Africa" on March 23. Register @ bit.ly/marchadis22.

Highlights

- The three main challenges Ashesi University was faced with at the onset of COVID were safety, accessibility, and wellbeing. They approached these challenges by distilling the problem to the simplest approach.
- In their approach with COVID, Groupe Supdeco Dakar (Senegal) learned the importance of pivoting quickly and the value of having a pre-existing online system in place.
- Sharing of best practices from lecturers and staff is vital in advancing the use of online tools in the classroom.
- Christopher Hosken, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Startup School points out that we should have a mandate to support users and beneficiaries for the long-term and not just for short-term profiteering. Quick fixes compound damaging factors.

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- In the current climate, education is more than classrooms and blackboards. It is more and more looking like online education that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere.
 - The African government is an important player in education. To be successful, there needs to be private-public relationships.

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.

- [George Washington University](#)
- [Groupe Supdeco Dakar](#)
- [Startup School](#)
- [Ashesi](#)
- Session recording:
<https://youtu.be/3UNhZqINSBU>

Chat Recap:

From Almaz Negash to Everyone:

If you haven't seen it; here is a link to Brookings Foresight Africa Report that addresses many of the challenges and opportunities in the continent

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/foresight-africa-2022/>

From Seth Abelson to Everyone:

In Africa, the internet infrastructure is the weakest link in the delivery of learning, what are governments doing to make access inexpensive and widely available?

From Christopher Hosken to Everyone:

Hi Seth, what a great question, we have seen great private sector interventions that are accelerating access, speed and reliability of the internet. I am also interested to hear from the group what successful gov interventions there have been and what we can all be doing to push public sector on this very important matter.

From Fatima Aden to Everyone:

What was the role of ministry of education for these good efforts you had for various institutions in a different areas?

From Christopher Hosken to Everyone:

The ministry has been slow to adapt and drive. Private sector has had to surge ahead, the ministry often learns retrospectively. There is a lot of work to be done to align the work of public and private sector to drive big towards big education goals

Everyone: at ISLA International Business School in Togo, as the internet connexion is not so good, we used mainly documents and audio to continue teaching via WhatsApp.

We have two steps in teaching via WhatsApp :

- 1- Sharing documents and any other pedagogical materials and Giving students explanations and assignment
- 2- Having online section with students via WhatsApp or Zoom for explanations

Thank You!

African Diaspora Network is grateful to the panelists for sharing their insights on education in Africa. Thank you to everyone who joined!

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