

African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022

May ADIS 2022: Bridging the Connectivity Gap

May 18 Session Summary- Highlights - Action Steps



The banner features a dark purple background with a white and orange geometric design. On the left, the text 'Bridging the Connectivity Gap' is displayed above a horizontal bar with teal and orange segments. On the right, the date and time 'May 18, 2022 / Wednesday 8AM PST, 11AM EST, 3PM GMT, 5PM CET' are listed. The central logo includes the African Diaspora Network emblem, a map of Africa, and the text 'ADIS22 African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022' with the tagline 'The Premium Convening of the African Investment Ecosystem in Silicon Valley'. Below the logo are two circular portraits of the moderators, Abbey Omokhodion and Philip Thigo, with their names and titles listed underneath. At the bottom, a registration link is provided.

Bridging the
Connectivity Gap

May 18, 2022 / Wednesday
8AM PST, 11AM EST, 3PM GMT, 5PM CET

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


ABBEY OMOKHODION
CFO, INTEL PSG,
PROGRAMMABLE SOLUTIONS GROUP
MODERATOR


PHILIP THIGO
DATA INNOVATION STRATEGIST
IN NAIROBI, KENYA
CONTEXT SETTER

Register @ bit.ly/mayadis22

Context:

On May 18, African Diaspora Network (ADN) hosted the fifth virtual webinar of the African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2022, “Bridging the Connectivity Gap.”

Over the last two years, African Diaspora Network has engaged individuals from over 69 countries, with an increased reach on the continent through our virtual convenings. In May, we brought together our community for a deeper conversation on how to close the digital divide.

With the rise of digital globalization comes the challenge of connectivity. Africa continues to lag behind in infrastructure, including electricity, energy, and transportation, which poses a significant challenge to the continent’s economic development. According to a 2020 report by McKinsey & Company, about 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity and comprise over $\frac{2}{3}$ of the global population without power. Moreover, Africa faces an infrastructure paradox – infrastructure investments have been increasing, but not enough money is being spent as 80% of infrastructure projects fail at the feasibility and business plan stage.

This session invites attendees to an interactive discussion addressing opportunities to advance connectivity and infrastructure in Africa. We invite the audience to participate in breakout rooms and connect with leaders from NGOs, academia, government, and corporations within the ADN community to discuss the gap and what the Silicon Valley Ecosystem and the Diaspora can do to mitigate the challenges.

ADIS22 May session began with a context setter from Philip Thigo, Data Innovation Strategist in Nairobi, Kenya.



Philip shared research findings, "How we allocate resources in the physical world is also affecting how we think in the virtual world. Unfortunately, benefits and opportunities around technology will always flow to early adopters. So how do we ensure that we are early adopters? By investing in this critical infrastructure. We have to invest in energy, data access and protection, internet quality free of shutdowns, retooling our schools, agile governance in terms of ensuring our laws and policies do not stifle innovation, and sustainable financing. We cannot build this new infrastructure on debt. We find a way to get Africans to invest in it."



Next, moderator, Abbey Omokhodion, CFO for Intel PSG, Programmable Solutions Group, introduced the breakout room sessions where the audience split into 2 rooms to discuss, 'What infrastructure challenges do you see in Africa?' and 'What needs to be done to close the gap?'

After the breakout sessions, Abbey shared, “The one over-arching item that was shared in our group was the lack of capital either by individuals to buy gadgets that require connectivity or lack of capital for a more robust infrastructure within the economy of the country to allow for connectivity. There were other conversations on learning and skills. Even if you have the gadget, how do you know how to use it? Or if you have infrastructure, how do you continue to innovate and build more infrastructure or maintain infrastructure?”

Debra Pacio, ADN’s Entrepreneurship and Community Engagement Manager, shared what her breakout room discussed, “We had the opportunity to hear from people from a variety of sectors. We heard this connectivity issue affects organizations who work in healthcare—those who are trying to do telehealth for example and may have



the routers but it won't work because the connectivity is a challenge. We also understand that location and connectivity come hand in hand. Some people may migrate to locations that have better access to these technologies or connectivity but that issue needs to be resolved so that there are no inequities between these locations—rural, urban, etc.”

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Invest connectivity in Africa:** In investing in connectivity, we need to invest in more than just infrastructure. We need to invest in energy, data access and protection, internet quality, technology skills, governance, and sustainable financing.
- **Engage Africa’s Youth:** With their ease in using technology, youth have a role to play in the adoption of technology in Africa
- **Check out the toolbox from Power Africa:** Designed to unlock power project development in sub-Saharan Africa, the [Power Africa Toolbox](#) is a one-stop shop for information and funding opportunities for private sector developers, governments, investors, utilities, and others seeking to increase access to electricity on the continent.

June 2022 ADN Engagement Opportunity:

Join us for any of the following convenings:

- [Builders of Africa's Future 2022 Pitch Session](#): June 23 @ 8am PST, 11am PST

Learn more about other upcoming events [HERE](#) and our African Diaspora Investment Symposium [HERE](#).

Highlights

- When it comes to internet usage, Africa is the least connected continent.
- There is a lack of capital to build and maintain a better infrastructure and to purchase devices that connect to the internet.
- Barriers to adoption of connectivity and meaningful use include:
 - Knowledge - whether people are aware of the Internet, especially in terms of mobile Internet and its potential benefits
 - Access - the availability of the necessary network infrastructure, as well as associated enablers such as access to electricity
 - Skills - extent to which people have the necessary skills and digital literacy to make meaningful use of the Internet
 - Affordability - costs associated with buying or accessing connected devices, cost of data plans, and other associated service fees
 - Relevance - extent to which people can find and consume content, services, and connected products
 - Safety and security - how worried people are about potential risks and negative experiences

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- African governments should budget for connectivity infrastructure.
 - Youth can help accelerate the adoption of technology in Africa.
 - Some people may migrate to locations in Africa that have better access to the internet. This needs to be resolved so there is no inequity between various locations—rural, urban, etc.

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

Resources:

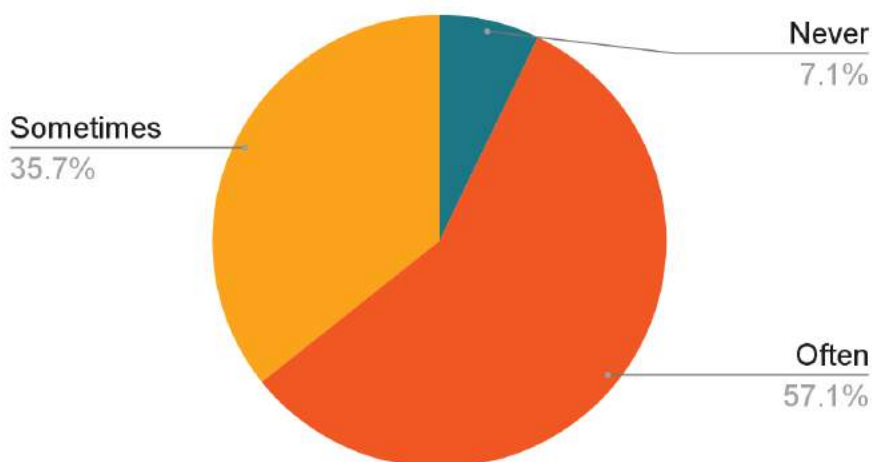
Click [here](#) to learn more about the African Diaspora Investment Symposium and past sessions.

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

- [Intel PSG](#)
- [Thunderbird School of Global Management](#)
- [Connectivity in Africa Presentation by Philip Thigo](#)
- [Session recording](#)

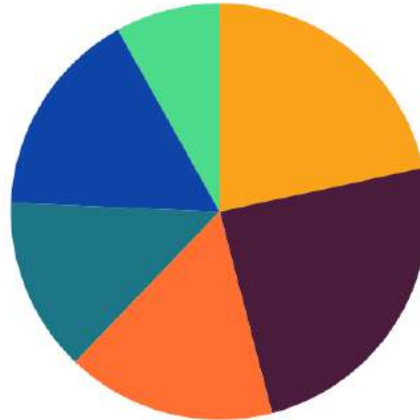
Poll Recap:

How Often Do You Experience Connectivity Problems?



What is Needed to Better Connect Communities in Africa?

- Better connectivity-broadband, fibre-optic, submarine cable system
- Lower cost data and devices
- Infrastructure and policy change
- Public, private partnerships
- Tools-Laptops, ipads, phones
- 1 more



Chat Recap:

Martin Ogang: Greetings everyone. Martin Ogang of Malaika Global Inc from Toronto

Dela Atubra: This information coming from this report is GOLD!

Elizabeth Gordon: Great presentation! Thank you so much. Definitely a lot to take in!

Mara Matsumura: Do universities in Africa have an equivalent to our Santa Clara University's Innovation Hub?

Almaz Negash: Hello Mara, thanks for being with us. Yes. In fact, Kenya is known for being the innovation hub in Africa with many situated in Universities and others throughout the country. Unfortunately, it is not in every part of the continent which is why this conversation is important.

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--Uganda

Philip Thigo: Internet, Data, Energy, Agile Governance, Skills, Sustainable Financing, Interdependent Foundations

Lynne Stillings: Thank you, Mr. Thigo, this was illuminating!

Thank You!

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

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