

ADN Impact and Innovation Forums 2021

Social Entrepreneurs' Rapid Response to Crisis

April 21 Session Summary- Highlights - Action Steps



2021 African Diaspora Network Impact and Innovation Forums

Healthcare, Education, Finance, and Connectivity

Webinar: Social Entrepreneurs' Rapid Response to Crisis
Wednesday, April 21, 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST, 3:00 PM GMT



ATTI WORKU
Co-CEO,
AFRICAN VISIONARY FUND



WENDO ASZED
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DANDELION AFRICA



DERRICK HOSEA OPIO
CEO AND FOUNDER,
ONELAMP



GRACE FRANCOISE NIBIZI
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SaCoDé

Hosted in collaboration with the
King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS)



KING BAUDOIN
FOUNDATION
UNITED STATES

Context:

On April 21, African Diaspora Network and the King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS) hosted the virtual webinar, 'Social Entrepreneurs' Rapid Response to Crisis.'

When disaster strikes, only the flexible and responsive survive. The uncertainties of a global pandemic and the increasing challenges of climate change overwhelmed even the most well-funded organizations. But where top international NGOs may falter to respond to changed conditions on the ground, locally-led social entrepreneurs can thrive.

SaCoDé, Dandelion Africa, and Onelamp are three organizations that successfully navigated the many challenges of 2020. With a fraction of the resources their international counterparts received, these social entrepreneurs' unique mission-driven approach and creativity enabled continued operations during the most troubling of times.

The African Visionary Fund also joined the conversation to talk about their work in unleashing breakthrough impact by driving resources to high-impact African founders, offering unrestricted, unburdensome funding to African visionaries.



Hafeeza E. Rashed, Senior Advisor of Communications & Outreach at King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS), began the 'Social Entrepreneurs' Rapid Response to Crisis' webinar by expressing her and KBFUS' excitement to collaborate with ADN on this webinar. She then explained what KBFUS does. She said, "KBFUS facilitates thoughtful, effective giving to Europe and Africa. We enable U.S. donors

to support their favorite causes overseas. We also provide European and African nonprofits with cost effective solutions to raise funds in the United States through a tool we call American Friends Fund. These funds save African nonprofits the trouble and expense of setting up their own U.S. charity."

Hafeeza then handed the floor over to Atti Worku, Co-CEO of African Visionary Fund, who moderated the panel session. Atti asked panelists about how they pivoted during the pandemic and challenges and opportunities they as social entrepreneurs have in accessing funding. The panelists were Grace Francoise Nibizi, Founder and Executive Director of SaCoDé, and Wendo Aszed, Founder and Executive Director of Dandelion Africa. Unfortunately Derrick Hosea Opio, CEO & Founder of Onelamp, had trouble with his internet connection and was not able to join the conversation. Information about Onelamp is in the resource section below.

Wendo began the conversation by describing Dandelion Africa's success despite the pandemic. She said, "The flexibility and trust of our community enabled us to not have to close our doors. Until now, we are still pushing on and being open and pivoting our strategy based on what is happening on a day-to-day basis. The trust of our



community is what keeps us grounded in who we are."



SaCoDé is successful because of the trust of their community. Grace said she is thankful to funders who support SaCoDé and explained why it can be challenging at times for social entrepreneurs to find funding. She said, "Sometimes there is a huge gap between how we understand our community and how donors understand our community. It is not easy to access funds if we do not have the same

understanding of what we want to do and the impact we want in our community."

Atti concluded by saying, "All the things (the panelists) said ring true for how important it is to fund locally-led organizations because of the proximity they have to the community they are serving, how quickly they can respond to crises, and their ability to bring maximum impact for the funds that are deployed."



To Atti's point, Almaz Negash, Founder and Executive Director of ADN, added, "What I have



heard from our speakers is that it's not how much metrics have been done, it's about trusting the people who you give money to. When you give money, you are trusting the person and allowing them to have flexibility. If you make the funding strict, the organization does not go any further and the program is tarnished. Especially during COVID, flexibility is key."

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Support Social Entrepreneurs:** It is difficult for social entrepreneurs to access funding as most funding goes to international organizations. Consider giving to a social entrepreneur in Africa or in your community.
- **Trust entrepreneurs with unrestricted funds:** Part of what makes social entrepreneurs effective in what they do is their ability to remain flexible in difficult times. When a crisis hits, funders must trust entrepreneurs to use funding to do what is best for the community, even if priorities shift due to unforeseen circumstances.
- **Communicate:** Practice being in regular communication with people you support or people who support you. Good communication allows trust to flourish when crises arise.

Highlights

- Because of their proximity to the community, social entrepreneurs are able to pivot very quickly to respond to issues affecting the community.
- Most funds are given to international organizations so it is not easy for local grassroots entrepreneurs to access funding.
- One challenge in accessing funding is there is often a gap between how social entrepreneurs understand their community and how funders understand the community.
- Funders are often looking for a number impact when assessing funds, but social entrepreneurs sometimes do not have these stats. The impact is not always in the numbers, but in lives changed.
- Cross-collaboration with partners is important for social entrepreneurs.
- Another approach social entrepreneurs take that make them successful is they look for gaps in what other entrepreneurs are providing and fill that gap so there is no duplication of efforts.

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

Resources:

Click [here](#) to learn more about the African Diaspora Network's Impact and Innovation Series.

Get to know the speakers better. Visit their organization websites.

- [African Visionary Fund](#)
 - [SaCoDé](#)
 - [Dandelion Africa](#)
 - [Onelamp](#)
 - [KBFUS](#)
 - [The African Diaspora Network](#)
- Session recording:
<https://youtu.be/bEEw0jh1R2Y>

Thank You!

The African Diaspora Network and KBFUS are grateful for the speakers who joined us April 21 to share their insight on social entrepreneurs' response to crises! Thank you to everyone who was able to join us!

AFRICAN DIASPORA NETWORK - 4701 PATRICK HENRY DRIVE, BUILDING 25
SANTA CLARA, CA 95054
WWW.AFRICANDIASPORANETWORK.ORG