

African Diaspora Investment Symposium 2021

Leapfrogging Africa: Healthcare, Education, Connectivity, and Finance

Online Forums July 2020 - January 2021

November 18 Session Summary- Highlights - Action Steps

ADIS21
AFRICAN DIASPORA INVESTMENT SYMPOSIUM
Leapfrogging Africa: Global Health, Education, Technology, and Finance

Special Thank You to Our ADIS21 November Speakers!

Fireside Chat

Agnieszka Winkler,
Board of Directors,
ADN and other public
& private boards

Patrick Awuah,
Founder and
President,
Ashesi University

Panel Session

Kofi Appenteng,
President,
Africa-America
Institute (AAI)

Stéphan-Eloise Gras, Executive
Director, Digital
Africa

Diane Saty Kouame,
Leader of Scholars
Program e-learning
initiative, Mastercard
Foundation

Demilade Oluwasina,
Faculty African
Leadership University

Context:

African Diaspora Investment Symposium (ADIS21) is the sixth annual global convening that celebrates and champions the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of Africans, Diasporans, and friends of Africa.

The ongoing pandemic has devastated the world and hit Africa hard. At the same time, it has forced a renewed focus on accelerating development across sectors. This focus presents an opportunity for African development to leap forward, bypassing physical infrastructure that the continent has lacked for the better part of a century. We foresee acceleration across four areas: **connectivity, education, healthcare, and finance**. ADN intends to be at the forefront of this momentum.

To prioritize community well-being in light of the current global health crisis, ADIS21 will take place as a monthly virtual series from **July 2020 to January 2021**.

This month's session focused on education and online learning in Africa. Remote learning has transformed into a key component of the new normal, proving that wide-scale implementation is not only possible, but necessary. Technological innovations in Africa can drastically reduce barriers and bring millions of African students online for the first time, provided that we can overcome connectivity infrastructure challenges and hardware/material costs. There is an unprecedented opportunity for Africa to accelerate education through technology, which is why investment in the sector is a priority for Africa. The global digital economy will enable millions of young Africans to partake and contribute to the sustainability of the continent's development.

Key Questions:

- What are the opportunities and challenges that the continent will need to address to systematize both in-person and remote educational opportunities?
- How do we ensure pedagogical continuity and the opportunity that e-learning represents in this context?



AFRICAN DIASPORA INVESTMENT SYMPOSIUM
Leapfrogging Africa: Health Care, Education, Technology, and Finance

We value your feedback.

Please take a few minutes to take the November 18 ADIS session survey here: <https://forms.gle/tTjrRZS1vP1TjgnEA>.

Register for [#ADIS21 December!](#)



Innovations in Payments in Africa

Wednesday December 16~ 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST, 4:00 PM GMT

Registration Link [here](#).

ADN's 10 Year Anniversary Community Celebration
Celebrate with Us!



African Diaspora Network
10-Year Anniversary Celebration

Keynote Speaker:

December 1, 2020/Tuesday
8am PST, 11am EST, 4pm GMT, 5pm CET



Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Chair of the International Board of United World Colleges, ADN Founding Board & Chair, Former President & CEO of Global Fund for Women



Dr. Jacqueline Bouvier Copeland, Founder of The WISE Fund and Black Philanthropy Month and its Summit series (Moderator)



Almaz Negash, Founder and Executive Director, African Diaspora Network



Dan Hartz, Founding Board Member, African Diaspora Network

Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro (Pictured Above)

Tuesday, December 1~ 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST, 4:00 PM GMT

Registration Link [here](#).

Summary

On November 18, 2020, African Diaspora Network hosted its fifth ADIS virtual forum: ***“Investment in Education and Online Learning in Africa.”*** The session brought together Africans, Diasporans, and friends of Africa to discuss challenges and opportunities of online education. The link to the **recording** can be found [here](#).

The session began with a rhythmic steel drum performance by Harry Best, a true



Caribbean steel drum music pioneer. A native of St. Lucia, Harry is a seasoned songwriter and has written hit songs for artists such as the late Caribbean international superstar, ‘Arrow’. His steel drum band, Shabang, has gained notoriety across North America and Europe for the enchanting sound of their steel drums and fun-loving approach to their performances.

Almaz Negash, founder and executive director of African Diaspora Network, welcomed attendees, thanked funders, board members, executive leadership council, champions, and team members for making the symposium possible. Almaz introduced the speakers and noted how she knew or was connected with each.

Almaz then turned the floor to ADN board member, Agnieszka Winkler, who congratulated ADN on its 10 Year Anniversary. She invited attendees to join the 10 Year Anniversary Community Celebration (link [here](#)). To move toward more collective action, ADN needs time, talent, and treasure. She asked participants to consider [donating](#) to ADN this Christmas.

Fireside Chat: Education as the Drive of Africa's Future



Fireside chat moderator, Agnieszka Winkler, part of the Board of Directors at ADN and other public & private boards, opened by asking Patrick Awuah, Founder and President, Ashesi University, **“What inspired you to leave a successful software engineering career in the U.S. and go back to Africa to start a university?”**

Patrick Awuah, replied, *“The short answer is the birth of my son, but also the timing of his birth. He was born shortly after a crisis in Rwanda and Somalia and the news was full of horrific stories. It seemed to me that we needed to change that narrative and the way to change the narrative was to make a contribution and a positive transformation on the continent. It got to a point where I realized there was an urgency in the work that needed to be done and people like me who have had education and great opportunities should be part of the solution. This was going to be my contribution-my life’s work-returning to Ghana to help develop a new generation of leaders.”*



Next, Agnieszka asked, **“To what do you contribute the ability to create that much success in such a short period of time?”**

Patrick responded, *“It all begins with the vision of the organization and the people that you assemble at the organization to execute that vision. For us, right from the very beginning, we were very clear that we weren’t just building a university-we were building an institution that was about helping to transform a continent. Our reason for existence was for the transformation of the continent. Everything we did, we led with that.”*

Panel Session: Investment in Education and Online Learning in Africa

The fireside chat was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Kofi Appenteng,



President of Africa-America Institute (AAI). The panel spoke about the challenges and opportunities COVID has brought to online education.

Kofi discussed how COVID was an unplanned experiment in use of online education. He asked the panel, **“What have you learned, informed by this experiment, that has changed your thinking?”**

Stéphan-Eloïse Gras, Executive Director of Digital Africa, responded, *“COVID forced us into de-centering our approach to traditional ways of working, teaching, and just interacting with people. Online education is a major necessity and opportunity for accelerating what we were already seeing. Moving to full online education means we need to find a way to include both basic skills in education and digital literacies. How do we foster creativity and how do we design an attention-healthy environment for both students and professionals so that we can continue enjoying the capacity of technology for distributing knowledge, capital, and know-how and at the same time remain in this fluid experience of both learning and working?”*



Diane Saty Kouame, Leader of Scholars Program e-learning initiative at the Mastercard Foundation, said, *“COVID-19 has highlighted the progress of online learning. It is introducing the possibility of blended learning which will have an impact way beyond the disruption of learning which is in front of us today. For us at the Mastercard Foundation, investing in online education*



is not only about responding to the disruption of classes because of COVID-19, it is also about investing in the education system of the future. We did a survey across our 25 partner universities and what we found is a need for digital designers to convert online curriculum and a need for quality assessment. We also saw a need for devices and connectivity. This is very crucial."

According to Demilade Oluwasina, an African Leadership University faculty member, *"A lot of the transition steps that Patrick mentioned were taken at Ashesi were the same steps taken at ALU to prepare for online learning. We already use a blended model of learning, we use technology to facilitate learning. But I learned we were not collectively as prepared as we thought we were for online education. There are gaps that need to be filled such as readiness of faculty and readiness of instructors to design content or to teach in ways that are appropriate for online learning. Also, readiness on the side of students as well. Readiness for students goes all the way from students being able to manage their own time and being able to follow and keep track with what they are learning to actually having the resources- having internet, having laptops. Flexibility in how we design or deliver learning is one of the greatest things that I have learned from this. We have learned best practices from across the continent and across the globe to see what suits this situation of online learning."*



Suggested Action Steps:

- **Seek Best Practices:** When adopting new ideas, look to partner organizations for best practices in how to change and progress current ways of doing things. Share your methods with partners as well so they can learn from you.
- **Be Inclusive:** We should continually think of new ways to make online learning more inclusive.
- **Change the Narrative:** Wherever you live, tell positive stories about the work people are doing on the continent of Africa.

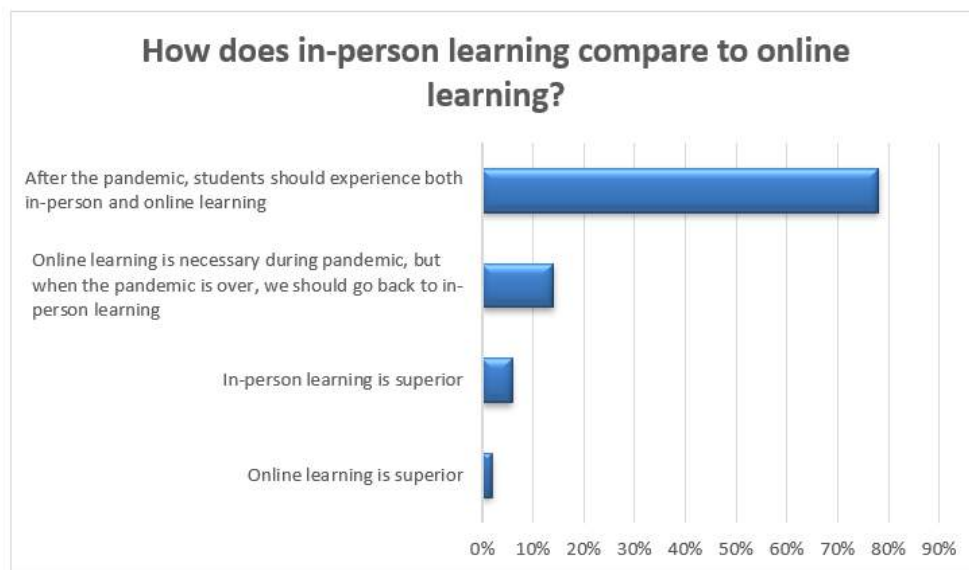
Highlights

- It is important to not only equip students with skills to find a job, but also equip them with skills to create new jobs.
- There are limitations and advantages to online education.
- Online education is very convenient and accessible to many students, but it is also easy to become fatigued when having only online classes.
- Some needs in online education include teachers that are familiar with teaching online and designers who can create online curriculum.
- One disadvantage to online learning is not every student has access to laptops or online connectivity.
- Advantages of online learning include accessibility for people with a disability and easy access for communities that are more dispersed.
- Online education should have a relevant curriculum and be accessible to all students.

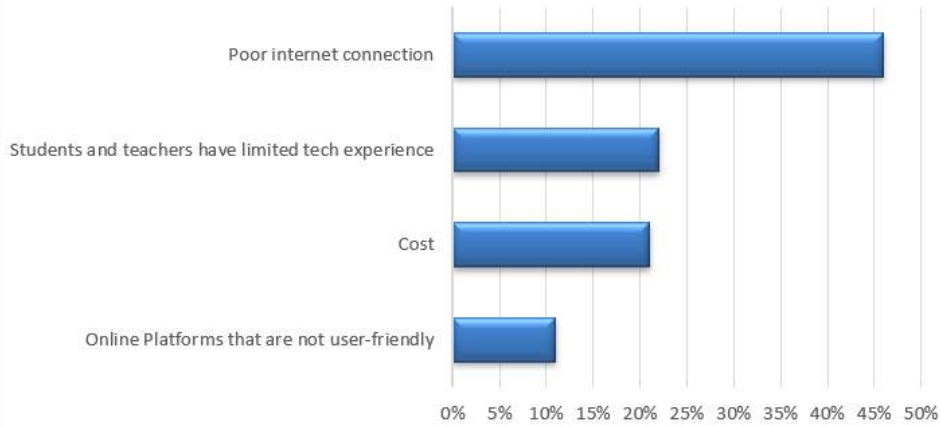
See the entire session recording [here](#)

Poll Results

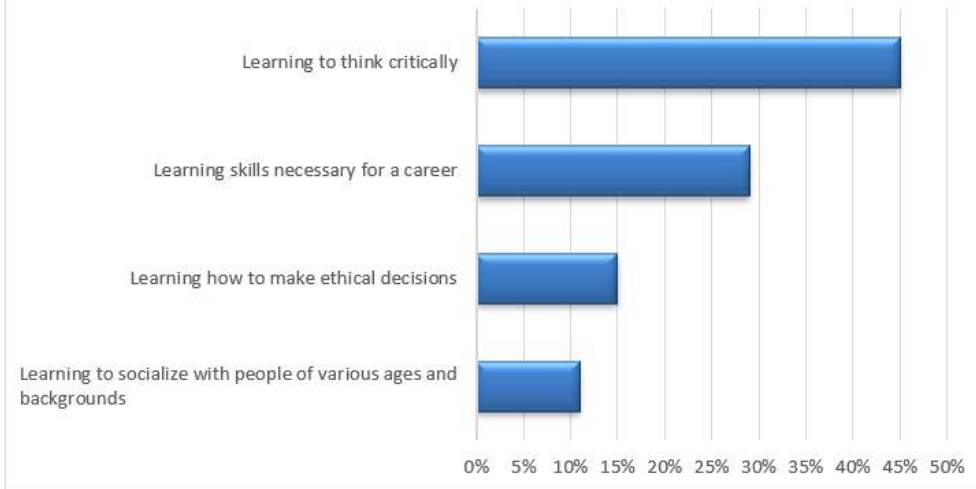
A live poll was conducted during November's virtual forum (pictured below). The first question asked was, 'How does in-person learning compare to online learning?' The participants responded as follows: After the pandemic, students should experience both in-person and online learning (78%), online learning is necessary during the pandemic, but when the pandemic is over, we should go back to in-person learning (14%), in-person learning is superior (6%), online learning is superior (2%). The second question asked was, "What do you see as the biggest barrier to online education?" The responses were: Poor internet connection (46%), Students and teachers have limited tech experience (22%), Cost (21%), and Online Platforms that are not user-friendly (11%). The third question asked was, 'What is the most important aspect of education?' The participants responded: Learning to think critically (45%), Learning skills necessary for a career (29%), Learning how to make ethical decisions (15%), and Learning to socialize with people of various ages and backgrounds (11%).



What do you see as the biggest barrier to online education?



What is the most important aspect of education?



Conclusion

COVID-19 has made it clear that not only is online education important, it is a necessity. There are both challenges and opportunities to learn online learning and it is up to us to ensure that online education serves students well. Curriculum must be relevant and online learning accessible to all students. The diaspora and friends of Africa can help by sharing best practices and funding educational institutions in Africa.

We invite the participants of the November 2020 forum to share their feedback by filling out the following survey: <https://forms.gle/tTjrRZS1vP1TjgnEA>.

We look forward to having you at the upcoming ADIS21 December 2020 event!

Thank you,

The African Diaspora Network Team

Resources:

Visit [ADIS21](#) Website for Resources on Education - Healthcare - Connectivity - Finance

Get to know the speakers better. Visit their organization websites

- [Ashesi University](#)
- [Africa-America Institute \(AAI\)](#)
- [Digital Africa](#)
- [Mastercard Foundation](#)
- [African Leadership University](#)
- [Santa Clara University](#)

- Session recording:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIheeVCtSGc>

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