

ADN Impact and Innovation Forums 2021

Investing in Grassroots African Healthcare Organizations

May 25 Session Summary- Highlights - Action Steps



**2021 African Diaspora Network
Impact and Innovation Forums**
Healthcare, Education, Finance, and Connectivity

Webinar: Investing in Grassroots African Healthcare Organizations
Tuesday, May 25, 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST, 3:00 PM GMT



DIANE DODGE,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
TIBA FOUNDATION



DAN OGOLA
FOUNDER AND CEO,
MATIBABU FOUNDATION KENYA



NANCY REYNOLDS
CHAIR OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
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REBECCA STEVENS
HEAD, GLOBAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS,
NOVARTIS GLOBAL HEALTH

Session supported by:

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Context:

On May 25, African Diaspora Network, Tiba Foundation, and Genentech hosted the virtual webinar, 'Investing in Grassroots African Healthcare Organizations.'

Local grassroots healthcare organizations are a critical link between communities and the primary-healthcare system in Africa. There are more than 1 million Community Health Workers across sub-Saharan Africa alone, all working to reduce barriers to healthcare. They provide low-cost healthcare solutions and public health awareness to their community.

Africa carries much of the world's disease burden, but has minimal access to resources. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Director General, "The developing world carries 90% of the disease burden, yet poorer countries have access to only 10% of the resources that go to health." Furthermore, according to the Foundation Center, only 1.1% of international giving is given to local organizations.

Besides a lack of funding, a lack of power is also in play. This March, the UNA-NCA African Affairs Committee hosted a virtual panel discussion that discussed the importance of economic investment and unique collaborations within African health care. Panelist Dr. Yolanda Ogbolu, the Chair of the Partnerships, Professional Education and Practice Department and Associate Professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore, School of Nursing (UMSON) and School of Medicine, noted, "People and countries are really cracking because they're focusing under the assumption that money is the most important thing, but power is the real protagonist of the story: power of the few, powerlessness of many, collective power of those fighting for change." Marginalized communities need to be able to express their needs. They need to be listened to. Afterall, they are a trusted partner to those who live in the community.

What can be done to shift the power to African grassroots health organizations? How can the diaspora invest in African grassroots health organizations? What is needed for these local health organizations to access more international giving?



Diane Dodge, Executive Director of Tiba Foundation and moderator of this session, began by wishing everyone a happy Africa Day. Diane said, "As we do this work here in the United States to make things more equitable for all people, we are today focusing on 'how do we support grassroots healthcare organizations in Africa?' They have been shouldering a lot of the work with very little resources, yet they are the most trusted and close to the community. I want to dedicate this session to them, those

front-line workers everywhere, who have been making things work for their local communities."

Diane asked Nancy Reynolds, Chair of the Board of Directors at Health Builders, to speak about the challenges grassroots healthcare organizations in Africa experience. Nancy explained, "I realized that the inequities are structural. If you look at the outcome measurements of the very large NGOs who absorb the majority of international funds versus the outcome measurements of locally-led organizations on the ground in East Africa, there is no



correlation. The locally-led community-based organization metrics are so stronger and impactful. They are small because they are kept small by the lack of funding. When I ask local NGO leaders what they think of international NGOs' work, they say, 'There is no legacy. There is no continuity. It doesn't even matter if they were here or not. When they leave- and they will leave at the end of their grant cycle- so does their work leave.'"

Dan Ogola, Founder and CEO of Matibabu Foundation Kenya, then spoke about some challenges they encounter as a grassroots organization. He said, "One, getting connected to



potential investors is a nightmare. Another challenge is the process of application and evaluation is so complex. If you do get the funding, it is project-based and for a short duration. Another challenge is power dynamics. The people that are providing the finances are the ones that define what success is, regardless of the local definition of what success is.”

Some solutions that Nancy and Dan recommended include:

- Develop a grassroots change lab to provide a space for people from grassroots movements and funders to meet and make a connection
- Encourage foundations to give small, unrestricted funding to grassroots organizations for multiple years
- Funders need to ask grassroots organizations what they need
- Simplify the application process

Rebecca Stevens, Head of Global Health Partnerships at Novartis, added to the solutions, “A collective that can do a survey of the landscape to see who is investing in what would be a really good idea. At the end of the day it’s a competition and the large NGOs have a large share of voice. Another thing I would say is that community-based organizations have huge advantages in terms of cost. They are able to do interventions at a very cost-effective price. I think this needs to be highlighted when these organizations speak to corporations or donors. Another one is sharing your success. A lot of organizations are really humble and they do great work, but no one knows about it.



Being present in peer-reviewed journals would go a really long way. At the end of the day, how can community-based organizations put themselves out there and show what they do to the world?"



Almaz Negash, Founder and Executive Director of the African Diaspora Network, concluded with, "You mentioned dignity. At the core of what we do, isn't it to dignify each other and give that sense of respect to the community in which we are trying to do work? I challenge large funders to go first to the grassroots organizations and support them. They know what to do-give them a chance by supporting them."

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Amplify the work of grassroots healthcare organizations:** Share stories and analytics about the impact grassroots organizations make on your social media channels and in conversations with colleagues.
- **Consider joining the board of a local community-based organization:** As part of their board, you can open up connections and knowledge-sharing.
- **'Adopt' a local community-based healthcare organization'** Find a local community-based healthcare organization in Africa and connect them with foundations. Also, consider visiting the organization to see what they do.

Highlights

- Local grassroots healthcare organizations are a critical link between communities and the primary-healthcare system in Africa.
- There are more than 1 million Community Health Workers across sub-Saharan Africa alone, all working to reduce barriers to healthcare. They provide low-cost healthcare solutions and public health awareness to their community.

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- Africa carries much of the world's disease burden, but has minimal access to resources. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Director General, "The developing world carries 90% of the disease burden, yet poorer countries have access to only 10% of the resources that go to health."
 - Furthermore, according to the Foundation Center, only 1.1% of international giving is given to local organizations.
 - Foundations like Segal Family Foundation only work with community-based organizations.
 - Challenges grassroots healthcare organizations encounter include a lack of funding, challenging application and evaluation processes, and differences in power dynamics. The people that are providing the finances are the ones that define what success is.
 - Opportunities for change include come up with a grassroots change lab to provide a space for people from grassroots movements and funders to meet and make connection, encourage foundations to give small, unrestricted funding to grassroots organizations for multiple years (this is a better way to analyze impact), funders need to ask grassroots organizations what they need, and simplify the application process

Chat Comments:

From Bhagwati Agrawal : This is BP Agrawal with Sustainable Innovations. www.si-usa.org. We are empowering women to set up their own health enterprises to deliver care to their communities. We are looking for African organizations to partner with.

From Cate : Just to add, we will be launching our LinkedIn like platform in June a few startups, investors and mentors will be chosen to beta test the platform. You can sign up here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-6WEXoSmSuXq8aRsToM9UZrWakBAyNFnxLIBKf5XDzA/edit?gxids=7628>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/catherine-kyule-5bb19471/>

From Sophie SHIMA : My name is Sophie , based in Belgium, working with a Community based org. We are working with refugees in Uganda (in Nakivale and Kampala) . Our 2 projects are on : 1. EPILEPSY (support patients to have access to diagnostic and medicines) - 2. Support Survivors of sexual violence to have access to health service. Am looking for support, mentor, partnership My contact : shima@pontdelasolidarite.org

From Bidemi Ojo : I'm Bidemi Ojo, co-founder/CEO of Gleeworld Pharmacy, a telepharmacy and medication delivery platform for pharmacies, hospitals and patients based in Lagos. We need partners.

From Adam Thompson : Hi. I'm Adam Thompson, Co Founder of eHealth Africa a public health NGO based in West Africa (primarily Nigeria). I recently also co-founded EHA Clinics to support high quality healthcare in Nigeria. Lastly, we're in the planning stages to launch EHA Impact Ventures to invest in small women-led enterprises in Nigeria and South Africa (and likely elsewhere in the coming years.

From 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 are dedicated to reducing health disparities by offering free online consultations for doctors and other health workers located "on the ground" in medically underserved areas. Pilot projects will launch soon with Matibabu Hospital and other locations in Kenya and Uganda.

From Demba Ndiaye : Very on point... Indeed Institutional donors are still using the old paradigm in development assistance... Away from the scope of the local grassroots... I'm based in Washington DC since 2011 and active in the Insurance and Financial Services, lately with stronger focus on local community health initiatives in Subsaharan Africa... Looking forward to partnering for bigger impact... My E-mail: demba@strategyfirst.org

From Dale Trotman : Hi Guys, my name is Dale Trotman. I am the CEO of MedRegis, based in Barbados, which is in the Caribbean. I want to assist these health care professionals with our solution to help them mobilise their healthcare efforts. Our primary solution is a user-centric

electronic health record focused on solving physician burnout, seen with similar but cumbersome solutions.

From Stephanie Heckman : Thank you Almaz & ADN for hosting this important conversation. Happy to connect with all of you. Equalize Health is actively seeking local innovators in health to accelerate bringing local solutions and innovations to commercial launch - particularly in maternal and newborn health. www.equalizehealth.org sheckman@equalizehealth.org

From Danny Gotto : Hello everyone, I am Dr Danny Gotto. CEO Innovations for Development. We're a hybrid grassroots nonprofit that takes tested innovations to scale in realizing health and education outcomes at last mile in Uganda. Please reach out (d.gotto@i4dev.or.ug) if you wanna know how we use innovations like technology, HCD, social entrepreneurship models to achieve impact in MNCH, RH, Education.

From Michel Musilikare : My name is Michel Musilikare, the Executive Director of Health Builders. The Health Builders team, all Rwandans, is leading and implementing sustainable projects, programs and initiatives with cost-effective and innovative solutions that are impactful and meaningful as we collaborate with local communities, local government and the Rwandan Ministry of Health. For more information about our work, please visit our website at www.healthbuilders.org

From Wilfred Njagi : Hi All, My name is Wilfred, CEO Villgro Africa. We are healthcare business incubator working with innovators across East Africa. We are keen to start working with a cohort of innovations that make a difference in the frontline healthcare work.

From Stephanie Heckman : Later on in the year we will be hosting a discussion with Million Lives Club (funded by USAID, UKAID, UNICEF and others) on how we can (& must) create a more inclusive global health ecosystem to accelerate improving health outcomes where it's needed most - please reach out to me if you are interested in participating, as we identify potential speakers in the coming months.

From melanie b : I am Flourian Protase working for CBIDO a grassroots organization supporting persons with disabilities in the areas of Comprehensive health and Rehabilitation via physiotherapy, occupational therapy, nutrition therapy and counseling therapy.

From AGATHA MASEMOLA : Good evening from Johannesburg, South Africa. My business partner and I have created an App aimed at solving for mental health; specifically focusing on increasing the reach and access to psychosocial services. We are planning to launch sometime. The App was self-funded but as we are looking to launch, we know we are going to need funding to scale both the technology platform (functionality and capacity) and social service providers. I am hoping that we can leverage this platform to source additional funds to continue developing this very proposition. Our company name is JUA Development Solutions. We are officially launching the service in Soweto (12th June) and hope to kick off our services with providing psychosocial support to kids with learning difficulties - often the underlying problem is an unstable home environment due to whatever socio-economic conditions at home. Thanks, I hope to connect with Foundations/ organisations that can assist with funding. Agatha

From melanie b : Florian is based in Karagwe Tanzania...bordering Rwanda and Uganda. Florian is out in the field and is happy for this much needed discussion. To check out more about CBIDO, click www.cbido.org

From Harold Glasser : Hello to all. I am Hal Glasser, founder Health Impact Partnership (healthhip.org). We are a nonprofit that funds for- and non-profit social enterprises that are improving and accelerating access to primary healthcare and underfunded health sectors in low income communities. We try to help fill the gap between philanthropy and impact investing for lower margin social businesses. Interested in meeting social enterprises with sustainable models of healthcare delivery. hglasser@healthhip.org

From Loksan Harley : huge opportunities to harness the skills of thr large numbers of African healthcare professionals working abroad. I know in the UK/Europe (and presumably in North America and other regions too) there are professional diaspora networks (e.g. Nigerian HC professionals in the UK, Sudanese doctors networks, etc.) that are supporting knowledge transfer and exchanges back home.

From Jack Higgins : We're eager to connect with physicians in the diasporas of African countries - most immediately from Kenya and Uganda. Any help in connecting would be greatly appreciated. I'm on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jackhigginsmd>.

Email: jhigginsmd1@gmail.com

From Tara Neuffer : Thank you everyone for joining this essential conversation. My name is Tara, operations manager of Tiba Foundation. Learn more about our work with grassroots partners on our website <http://www.tibafoundation.org/>

From Tara Neuffer : As well as Matibabu Foundation's website <https://www.matibabukenya.org/>

From Diane Dodge : Thank you everyone for being part of this conversation. If you would like to continue, please reach out to me dianedodge@tibafoundation.org

From Jane Agwaru : I am Jane Agwaru founder of ClinisonMedical services. We are constructing a medical centre in eastern Uganda. We are hoping to launch later this year-but are trying to raise money for an Xray machine which is crucial in diagnosing disease. Any help will be much appreciated. My email is admin@clinisonmedical.com. thank you

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.

- [Tiba Foundation](#)
- [Health Builders](#)
- [Matibabu Foundation Kenya \(MFK\)](#)
- [Novartis](#)
- [African Diaspora Network](#)
- [Genentech](#)
- Session recording:
<https://youtu.be/7bleh8izoll>

Resources from the Speakers

- Dan Ogola presentation on solutions for change for grassroots healthcare organizations:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1EAICX5CgwePL2hny9Uy3NGClgvGeeu4rnl_dIbVbcArl/edit?usp=sharing
- Dan Ogola of Matibabu Foundation was featured on CNN's 'The Next List' program on March 4, 2012: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXg5SBeIjx4>

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- Funder organizations dedicated to supporting community-based organizations:
 - [New England International Donors](#)
 - [Australian International Donor Network](#)
 - [Segal Family Foundation](#)
 - Funding collaboratives:
 - [African Visionary Fund](#)
 - [World Community Forum](#)

Thank You!

The African Diaspora Network, Tiba Foundation, and Genentech are grateful for the speakers who joined us May 25 to share their insight on grassroots healthcare organizations in Africa. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us!

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ABLE identifies 15-20 Black business leaders catalyzing an array of sustainable solutions to poverty across multiple sectors at the local and national level. This includes education, healthcare, finance, connectivity, agriculture, and renewable energy, all of which address essential community needs while spurring sustainable growth.

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QUESTIONS?

Contact Megan Hunsberger,
ADN program and digital media manager,
at megan@africandiasporanetwork.org