

Skoll World Forum Ecosystem Day 2022

Paving the Path Forward: Investment in Women

April 8 Session Summary - Highlights - Action Steps



Webinar: Skoll World Forum Ecosystem Day 2022
Paving the Path Forward: Investment in Women
Friday, April 8, 2022, 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST, 4:00 PM BST



ALMAZ NEGASH
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
AFRICAN DIASPORA NETWORK (MODERATOR)



LATANYA MAPP FRETT
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN



DANA WEEKS
CO-FOUNDER AND CEO,
MEDTRANS GO



SUNNY SATVA
FOUNDER,
VEGAN AFRICA FUND

Register @ bit.ly/ADNxSkoll2022

Hosted in collaboration with

skoll world forum

GLOBAL FUND FOR
WOMEN
Champions for Equality.

Context:

On April 8, African Diaspora Network and Global Fund for Women hosted, “Paving the Path Forward: Investment in Women,” as part of the Skoll World Forum Ecosystem Day 2022.

Women hold up half the sky, and with the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that women disproportionately carry the brunt of its impact. According to a [UN Report](#), Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) surveys indicate that 29% of working-age mothers living with children lost their jobs compared to only 20% of working-age men living with children. Women with children in the household were also more likely to report increased domestic work and childcare.

Despite the gaps, women have adapted and persevered to support their workplaces, communities, and families. How are women paving the path forward? In what ways are women continuing to make significant strides in the face of challenge? How can we better support women and invest in women-led organizations? This session examines how women continue to lead the way in reimagining the future of social entrepreneurship, healthcare, education, and other areas.



The ecosystem day began with a beautiful performance by artist Piwai, who sang “Malaika,” meaning “my angel.” Piwai also graced the audience with her newly-released, upbeat song, “Ma Level” with a message of women reaching new heights and going to the next level.

Dr. Latanya Mapp Frett set the context of the event, sharing how defenders of gender justice movements face adversity in their quest for equality.

“Globally we know that women and girls are participating in and leading movements, demanding their rights. They are fighting for fair and just democracy, and they are winning,” said Dr. Frett. “Yet their path is so difficult. Protest is on the rise. More governments are adopting repressive tactics, presenting increased challenges and risks for those fighting for their rights [...] COVID-19 added to these challenges. How do we support women who are facing authoritarianism during a global pandemic that forces them to do more with less? Women



are paving a path forward toward building a more equitable world.”

Grounding the context of the event in current events, Almaz Negash, Founder and Executive Director of African Diaspora Network, shared her own experiences of growing up in Africa during a period of war and devastation.



She referenced the tragedy of Ukraine in witnessing how the devastation of war does not discriminate and has touched on the lives of mothers and children. "With all the challenges, we recognize that there are women, mothers, struggling and suffering in the war we are seeing right now," said Almaz. "As a global citizen, I see this as my problem too."

Almaz then opened the floor for the in-depth panel discussion, beginning with authentic introductions by asking what it means for the panelists to be who they are as a woman leader and what they would like to see happen in a global setting.

Among the panelists, Sunny Satva spoke to her experience as a Diasporan now living in Kenya and leading the Vegan Africa Fund. Her work seeks to empower women at the forefront of food and technology systems, such as the creation of alternative proteins and vegan leather production. When asked what challenges she sees in Africa, Sunny replied, "I see a lot of hope. A majority of companies we are looking for are women-owned and over 50% have been started in the past two years. There are emerging entrepreneurs in these grave times of a pandemic and global recession. Women are ingenious and taking it to the next level."



Dana Weeks, CEO of MedTrans Go, spoke to how women have persevered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. "According to the CDC, ⅔ of women in the U.S. are caregivers," noted Dana. "Before the pandemic or during, women have stepped up to bear the weight of the caretaking, especially in communities of color where the pandemic has hit disproportionately. We have seen the

challenges to a system that is also not taking care of women. Whereas women in health

have been invisible for so many decades, the visibility and spotlight now being shown is giving an opportunity for us to step into new roles, create new innovations. To summarize, it has impacted women in greater numbers and has empowered women to create the solutions for it.”

In their closing call to action, the panelists emphasized the importance of driving investment in women-led organizations. According to Dr. Latanya Mapp Frett, “Less than 1% of all gender-focused aid reaches women’s organizations. 99% of gender-related support and international aid fails to reach those who it claims to transform. When we hear the rhetoric around decolonization, we have to ask, where is the money going. We need to catalyze more meaningful change and systems [...] We ask you to partner with us to fund local movements.” To conclude, “We know there is a future where women are not forced to choose between families and economic livelihood,” said Dr. Frett.

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Listen to and Support One Another:** Listening to the stories of our community members and women, in particular, is key. By listening to one another, we can better support one another.
- **Intergenerational Exchange is Key:** The gender justice movement does not happen in a vacuum. It is critical to bring together individuals across generations and to reach out to allies, men included, to make a difference in the lives of women around the globe.
- **Hold Governments Accountable:** To demand policy change, we must make sure that governments and community leaders are creating a conducive and equitable ecosystem for people to thrive.

Highlights:

- COVID has opened up to the world the systemic inequities that existed well before the pandemic.

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- There is a disproportionate burden on women for the need to care for the life cycle of children and aging parents.
 - COVID led to a number of new challenges, including grief, mental health, and a 14% increase in challenges in maternal health.
 - The most marginalized community, women, girls, and gender nonconforming people, are always the last in that line to receive the benefits from governments – we have to be very careful to center these groups in recovery efforts.
 - We have to have good policies in the books, but we also have to work from the margins.
 - 80% of people identifying as plant-based vegan are women – consuming in these ways leads to not only longevity but a deeper connection to the Earth.
 - Africa has 17% of the world’s population, yet the continent receives less than 1% of global venture funding. Less than 1% is going to women-funded/women-run organizations. The funding gap is huge.
 - There is a future where we can develop systems to better support women. It is imperative that flexible and long-term funding and resources get to feminist activists.
 - Intergenerational collaboration and nurturing innovation is important to the future of our world.

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

Spring 2022 ADN Engagement Opportunities:

Join us for any of the following convenings:

- April 27 @ 8am PDT: [ADIS22 April “Energizing Investment in the Solar and Renewable Sector”](#)

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- May 18 @ 8 am PDT: "[ADIS22 May: Bridging the Connectivity Gap](#)"
 - May 25 @ 8 am PDT: "Africa Media Roundtable": Details TBA

Resources:

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

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

- [Global Fund for Women](#)
- [MedTrans Go](#)
- [Vegan Africa Fund](#)

Session Recording [Here](#)

Audience Remarks:

"A big thanks to our phenomenal and inspiring moderator, panelists and fellow participants." - Dr. Janet Munakamwe

"Almaz you inspire me so much and feel so fortunate that I have you as my diaspora sister and you are truly an asset to the global diaspora community." - Solomon Belette

"It has been an amazing conversation. Bravo!!" - Ethel Mwafulirwa

"Thank you for organizing this event. Very inspiring." - Ramatu Ahmed

"Thank you for this informative discussion, some very important issues were raised today for each of us to go out and make our contribution to the solution." - Roxanne St. Claire

"It is really heartwarming to hear about the efforts to empower women and be part of a very engaging conversation." - Dorin Parmar

"This session is so encouraging because I see the power of so many women working together." - Kathryn Hall-Trujillo

Chat Recap:

Solomon Belette: I share Almaz's remarks about building bridges between women and men that are based on equity and mutual respect. The problem is the unjust system that men, as power holders and brokers have perpetuated historically. That enemy is what we must disrupt and change.

Ramatu Ahmed: Immigrant women are facing some challenges in the diaspora. What type support is available for immigrant women. Or connecting immigrant women to trade with the women in the diaspora.

Dr Janet Munakamwe: Migrant, asylum seekers & refugee womxn are exposed to xenophobia which is pervasive in South Africa - institutionalized including physical attacks and this adds on to the burden of unpaid care worker as families are scattered. In addition, we have received sad report of the death of one Zimbabwe man, a victim of current vigilante coordinated xenophobic attacks. The widow has since fled their residence for security reasons and also dear of extra harassment particularly in the absence of requisite documents to stay in SA as a result of institutionalized xenophobia from state-crafted migration laws and policies. Unfortunately, the widow is not working and reported that the family was solely dependent on the daily income of about \$6 per day. This is one of the critical examples that require the much needed support & solidarity from all sisters here. The question here is how we could assist and empower these categories of women beyond hand outs?

Elsbeth TeBrake: Through Miller Center in Santa Clara, I am mentoring Selma, founder of Amaati in Ghana. A great social entrepreneur impact through women owned engagements to grow Fonio on undeveloped land. The focus on enabling women owned land resources, to grow Fonio to feed their own family with nutritious food and be an economic opportunity to be self sufficient, and grow opportunities for their families and their communities. With great support now from their government and others.
<https://www.amaatigroup.com/>

Thank You!

African Diaspora Network is grateful to the panelists for sharing their insights on how women are paving the path forward. Thank you to everyone who joined!

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