

Transforming Africa with Knowledge”.

AFRICA SKILLS WEEK

Edition 2022

***Advancing knowledge and skills
strategies in Africa***

ABOUT AFROSKILLS

Founded in 2018 by young Africans, AfroSkills contributes to advancing human capital development in Africa. We bring together African and global expertise across boards to pursue our vision of *“Transforming Africa with Knowledge”*.

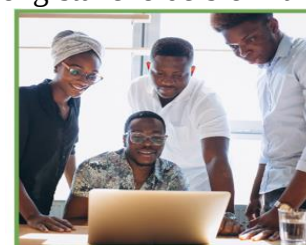


Our mission consists of contributing to accelerating development people skills in Africa and improving living conditions of the populations, by transforming the young African workforce into a real factor of economic, political, and social development. To this end, AfroSkills offers training programs, forums for exchanging knowledge and good practices, opportunities to initiate and contribute to research and innovation projects as well as opportunities for policy advocacy and dialogue.

Thanks to our digital platform for creation, transmission and dissemination of knowledge and skills, the "Africa Knowledge Hub", Africans, and anyone interested in Africa can offer and access courses and training programs of international standard for free or at very affordable prices anywhere in the world. The “Africa Knowledge Hub” is a non-institutional platform connecting those with skills and those seeking to acquire skills.



The Africa Knowledge Hub also facilitates exchanges and collaboration among stakeholders of human capital development in Africa. It strengthens cooperation among public authorities, universities and training institutes and the private sector, to better align training programs and research and innovations projects with the needs of the labour market and countries’ development priorities on the one hand, and on the other hand, to enhance private sector’s contribution to financing and supporting education, training and research and innovation.



The Africa Knowledge Hub is accessible at:

<https://www.afroskills.org/fr/home>

FOREWORD



Aiming for the transformation of Africa with knowledge, *better with the know-how of Africans* is not a simple option, it is an initiative that needs the full support of all of us. Aligning research, training, and skills' development to the needs of the job market in African countries is a challenge that must be met, and on which AfroSkills with its network of partners and collaborators is working relentlessly and with passion and enthusiasm: Tributes and best wishes.

African Development Bank's President **Akinwumi Adesina** underscores the need for young Africans to be prepared for the jobs of the future: *"From artificial intelligence to robotics, machine learning and quantum computing, Africa needs to invest more in reorienting and reskilling its workforce, especially the youth"*.

Ahead of the Africa Education Transformation Summit held in September 2022, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres noted that inadequate curricula, outdated teachers' training and teaching methods deprive students of the skills needed to navigate in today's rapidly changing world. Raphael Obonyo of Africa Renewal Magazine notes that while emphasizing the importance of inclusive and equitable quality education to achieving SDG 4, Mr. Guterres added that *"any country that does not actively overhaul its education system today, risks being left behind tomorrow"*

To the question of whether African countries are preparing their youths for the jobs of the present and those of the future some will answer YES and others NO. It is worth noting that there is progress here and there, albeit timid. Though unable to provide a firm answer to this question, I would like to say that by organizing African Skills Week (ASW) from December 7 to 10, 2022, AfroSkills is providing a sound response to this question.

This report of the African Skills Week 2022 looks back on the lived and shared experiences and presents the different activities and summaries of the wealth of information conveyed during the event.

On my part, I have noted that beyond mere education and training, Africa must improve the quality and content of her training offers to develop qualified and competent workforce. A certificate is a presumption of knowledge, it will take skills' development to build human capital that is up to the development and emancipation challenges of Africa.

Wisdom, humility, and skills should henceforth characterize us.

Looking forward to the 2024 edition of African Skills Week

Wishing you a pleasant reading!

Prof. Jean Marie KANDA NTUMBA

Dean of Polytechnic Faculty

University of Lubumbashi – Democratic Republic of Congo



Promoting knowledge, revitalizing the workforce, giving hope

It is with above title that I start this editorial, which I have the honour to produce on behalf of the 2022 edition of the African Skills Week (ASW), held from 07 to 10 December 2022.

I participated in this event as a member of the evaluation jury for the finalists' projects of the Business Ideas Competition. To tell the truth, my participation was motivated by curiosity. First, I was curious to know what it was all about. Secondly, I did not want to disappoint the initiators of the project, who relied on my expertise as a teacher and manager of development projects. Thus, with other experts, I evaluated a dozen of investment projects that young men and women have designed to forge their space in the economies of their countries.

Accounting what happened, I do not regret having given my time for this event. First, I find that for a trial, AfroSkills has demonstrated that they have an ambition, a vision, and a mission that forces anxiety and that they can pull out of their comfort zone, young African men and women who live in and out of Africa. Better, they have also succeeded in the bet of equity between men and women. In an African continent where, compared to men, women have less access to employment and constitute the bulk of the productive force in the informal economy sector, elimination of systemic factors that prevent emergence, development and empowerment of women is essential to effectively revitalize the productive force. The awarding of two of the first three places to projects designed and carried out by and with women is a distinction of honour for AfroSkills. Then, the projects I evaluated with the other members of the jury satisfied my curiosity and boosted my commitment to promoting workforce's equity in Africa. The projects were of good quality and the designers presented them with enthusiasm, which is a fundamental element of the future.

To me, the designers of the projects that reached the final, through their verve, convinced the participants that AfroSkills carries the hope of seeing young African entrepreneurs acquire skills to influence and control small and medium enterprises in their countries' economies. This is more important as African countries march towards implementation of the AfCFTA, the African Common Market, which will be the largest free trade market in the world with 54 countries and eight regional economic communities. In such a context, it is essential to increase the visibility of young entrepreneurs and make them autonomous by creating spaces for exchange and access to resources to take advantage of economic and cultural opportunities. This is the titanic challenge that AfroSkills wants to take up and which gives it a unique, innovative and resolutely pan-African character.

Moving forward, I make the thesis that the revitalization and pursuit of equity in the labour force in Africa should be the focal point, if not the ultimate goal of AfroSkills. By equity, I mean the reduction of disparities between men and women in the workplace and the provision of adequate social protection to workers in the formal and informal economy. By equity, I mean improving African human capital.

In recent years, we have witnessed a diplomacy rush of the great powers towards the African continent, which I find aggressive. The United States, France, Turkey, Russia, China, to cite only these examples, are increasing high-level visits to Africa. The reasons for this new rush to the continent are multiple. However, two of these reasons capture my attention: the continent's vast natural resources and human capital. Currently, 60% of the African population is under the age of 25 and according to forecasts, Africa alone will be home to 42% of the world's young people in 2030.

Besides cataclysmic and pessimistic forecasts, the plain truth is that Africa is the continent of the future and of hope. It is the impressive human capital, to say this incomparable work force that the whole world envies. Therefore Africa can no longer do without the training of this force and its access to employment through entrepreneurship.

The Africa of 2023 is a contrasting world. On the one hand, there is a low youth employment rate, a low banking rate; regression of individual freedoms here and there; regression of republican value; inequitable access to health care; upsurge in migration towards the West and the Arab countries via corridors where racism and human trafficking reign, and alarming erosion of the values of knowledge and work driven by globalization through social networks. On the other hand, there is the penetration of new information and communication technologies (NICTs), which although are yet to penetrate all households, have introduced profound social, cultural, political, and economic changes. Modes of transport and travel, financial transactions, relationships between businesses and between business and customers, and the nature of work in all sectors of activity have taken on new dimensions.

One of the consequences of the penetration of NICTs is the boom in digital platforms, shading the lack of real new sources of employment, promoting growth of the informal sector, and dissimulating the inefficient fight against poverty. According to CENFRI, in 2019, there were around 365 digital platforms in operation in Africa¹. Since then, the number of platforms and their users has only increased.

Above all, I would say, beware: new opportunities must no longer escape the control of African businesses and people. The time has come to replace the narrative of the marginalization of Africans in their economies with a narrative of inclusion, participation, and effective control of the economies of countries and the continent - providing the context and the challenge that give AfroSkills a revolutionary dimension. This revolutionary dimension gives rise to hope. It is in the name of this hope that I invite Africans from Africa and the diasporas to invest intellectual, academic, material and financial resources to support AfroSkills, a project that carries.

Dr. Eric Edi

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¹ (<https://cenfri.org/wp-content/uploads/Africas-digital-platforms-trends-report.pdf>).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the strong economic growth experienced over the past two decades, the levels of economic transformation, poverty reduction and skills development in Africa are far below those of other regions. To be effective, skills' development requires right reforms and adequate investments in education and training, as experienced in China and other East Asian countries.

Yet Africa's increasing working-age population offers a real opportunity to improve collective prosperity. Unfortunately, the workforce remains inadequately skilled, thus clouding economic prospects, even though public spending on education, albeit still insufficient has increased sevenfold over the past thirty years.

From the inadequacy of programs through the lack of synergy of action by education and training stakeholders, insufficient financing for training and R&D, to the unfavourable environment to the development of the entrepreneurial spirit, the constraints to the development of skills in Africa are legion. The result is endemic unemployment among young Africans notwithstanding the fact that they completed higher education.

However, hope for a forward leap is possible. There is need for systemic reforms and upscaling investments in skills development to improve productivity and economic growth, and foster inclusiveness and adaptability to accelerate Africa's transformation.

At the end of the ASW, the following recommendation help ensuring more success for the future editions and achieve the goals of the African Skills Week:

Regarding the African Skills Week itself, it will be necessary to:

- Leverage the fast-growing community of users of AfroSkills digital platforms and the growing AfroSkills' convening power, to reach out more stakeholders inside and outside the continent, media and other strategic partners and sponsors who will be willing to contribute to the success of future ASW editions.
- Organize the conference in a hybrid format (face-to-face and online), to better mobilize stakeholders and increase the credibility and scope of the event.

With regard to pursuing the solutions pathways that emerged during the events, it was recommend:

- To strengthen synergies among stakeholders, including public authorities, universities, vocational training centres and businesses, to build training programs that are aligned with the evolving needs of African economies;
- To create frameworks for exchanges and benchmarking, crossroads of professions and an alliance of African skills, as think-tanks for strategies and solutions for development of sectorial skills to anticipate on the skills required in the future and align the training offer with the fast technological and economic development in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU);
- To intensify investments in scientific and technological R&D, to improve and extend the mechanisms for collecting and analysing data, computerize decisions and better orient resources in priority areas such as agriculture, health, and education.



- To support young innovators through incubators and policy advocacy. This can take the form of training, improvement of legal frameworks, search for technical and financial partners, etc.
- To Africanise of African languages by expanding their use on the continent to help young African better exchange, understand their environment, their problems, their origins, and their life purpose.
- To identify and broaden the base of education, training and R&D financiers to entrepreneurs and corporations, and scale up the use of participatory financing such as crowdfunding, Business Angels, etc.;
- To widely adopt the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), as a practical solution allowing efficient and secure circulation of funds, through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and initiating legal reforms to facilitate investments in skills development in Africa.
- To establish permanent consultation frameworks to enhance trust of the diasporas to the continent by enhancing diaspora's contribution to improvement of business environments and relaxing entry procedures with e-visa and visa waivers to encourage diaspora investments and partnering with resident investors on the continent.

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Disclaimer

This report does not constitute a policy, technical, financial, or legal advice and in no way does it claim to replace commitments and orientations of the skills development policies of African countries. Neither AfroSkills nor the experts who have contributed to producing this report and their various organisations can be held responsible for errors, omissions or inaccuracies it may contain.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- **AADVT** : African Alliance for Development of Vocational Training
- **ASW**: Africa Skills Week
- **ACDSI**: Africa Center for Development and Social Innovation
- **TAVT**: Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training
- **ABIC**: Africa Business Ideas Competition
- **CMS** : Content Management System
- **TNCTE** : Tunisian National Centre for Technologies in Education
- **ILO** : International Labour Organisation
- **PAPSS**: Pan-African Payment and Settlement System
- **S&P** : Standard and Poor's
- **DRC** : Democratic Republic of Congo
- **R&D** : Research & Development
- **ASW** : Africa Skills Week
- **ITC** : Information and Communication Technology
- **AU** : African Union
- **AfCFTA** : African Continental Free Trade Area

1. INTRODUCTION

“Advancing knowledge and skills strategies in Africa” is the theme of the 2022 edition of Africa Skills Week. The stakes are high: the development of human capital in general and of skills and knowledge in particular are essential for strengthening economic competitiveness and fosters social inclusion and poverty reduction. An insufficient supply of skills and limited knowledge constitute a bottleneck for the well-being of the populations – hindering private sector development and hinders economic growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has rekindled the weaknesses in skills development systems in Africa, compounding challenges in education and vocational training. The spotlight is qualified youths that are without jobs, with very few prospects, and whom the States are finding more and more difficult to control. A situation caused by inadequacy of the training offered with the needs of the job market.

Education and training systems lag behind the fast-evolving needs of the job market. Programs are still very theoretical, and the evaluation systems favour more the quest for certificates than the need to acquire practical skills and capabilities that will help successful integration in the job market. Businesses are insufficiently involved in the design of education and training policies and programs. Consequently, they are reluctant to support establishment and operation of schools, universities, and training centres. This widens the disconnect between training received and the skills required by companies, particularly in sectors driven by innovation.

The absence of skilled workforce hinders industrialization in most African countries. The more businesses move up the value chains and set up more production systems, the more acute this problem becomes. Yet tremendously dynamic and innovative, African youth have an imperative need to project themselves into the future.

Although the solutions are far from simple, a paradigm shift in education and training is very urgent. The traditional academic approach is no longer sufficient: school must adapt to become a place where training is oriented towards employability. It is a question of a training that goes beyond providing certificates to equip graduates with skills that will help them to find a job. To this end, youths should emphasize on skills' acquisition and schools on skills development.

Several questions therefore arise: What strategies and tools will improve the performance of education systems in terms of employability and professional integration of young people in Africa? What financing mechanisms can be deployed to develop human capital in Africa? What strategies and tools will encourage the private sector and the African Diaspora to invest in skills development in Africa?

To promote more inclusive growth, it would be necessary to strengthen Africa's human capital and create more jobs in fast-growing sectors. To achieve it, countries should better integrate education and skills' development strategies in their long-term economic development plans, while improving and expanding

education and training programs to enhance employability and worker productivity. This requires measures to improve the quantity and quality of education and vocational training offers. To respond to the rapidly changing needs of African economies, education systems must strengthen skills in all fields and especially in those of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to meet the requirements of the workforce for the fourth industrial revolution. It is therefore also urgent to develop the institutional and organizational skills of States and businesses.

To discuss these needs, researchers, government officials and representatives of the private sector of African countries were invited in their personal capacity to share their analyses, knowledge, experiences and opinions, in order to discuss solutions, highlight examples of success and identify main projects for the future of skills and knowledge development in Africa.

This first report of the African Skills Week is a collaborative effort of on the continent and the Diaspora. It discusses the state of the play of skills and knowledge development in Africa and provides solutions pathways to improve strategies and policies at country and regional levels. Some important topics could not be addressed. The objective of this conference is to be able to serve as a reference, to make Africa an attractive destination for investments in skills development, R&D and innovation.

In addition to this introduction in section 1 and conclusions and recommendations to inform and guide the development and review of human capital development policies and programs in Africa in **section 5**, this document has two other sections and annexes. Section 2 provides a summary of the organization and operationalisation of the 2022 edition of the African Skills Week. Section 3 presents the discussion panels and their recommendations, while the annex 1 presents the panellists and annex 2 a summary of the Africa Business Ideas Competition 2022.

2. AFRICA SKILLS WEEK 2022

2.1. Presentation and description

The African Skills Week (ASW) is a flagship event that AfroSkills organises every year with the objective of catalysing human capital development in Africa and promoting Africa as a continent of knowledge and a destination for investment in education, training, Research and Development (R&D) and innovation. It takes place in French and English and brings together education leaders, government officials, heads of development organizations and financial institutions, business leaders and captains of industry from Africa and around the world. The participants share best practices, discover trends and discuss solutions to problems faced in R&D, vocational education and training, skills demand, and skills of the future in Africa.

The 2022 edition, the first of its kind, took place online (on Events.afroskills.org, the AfroSkills events' platform) from December 07 to 10, under the theme: *“Advancing knowledge and skills strategies in Africa”*. The event staged nine (09) discussion panels on topics related to skills and knowledge development in Africa.

Speakers were Africans from the continent and the diaspora. Networking sessions and booths' visits also enriched the event, allowing participants to expand their networks and develop B2B/B2G and other partnerships.

The finals of the 2022 Africa Business Ideas Competition (ABIC 2022) further enriched the conference, allowing to meet, identify and support innovative projects designed by African students, entrepreneurs, and researchers. The competition attracted 383 candidates from 16 English-speaking and French-speaking African countries. The lucky winners received financial rewards and their projects were admitted free of charge to the acceleration program of **Rabawa**, the AfroSkills' innovation and business incubator, accessible at:

Rabawa

<https://www.rabawa.afroskills.org/en/>

2.2. Key Challenges

Due to its innovative nature and the fact that it took place entirely online, the first edition of the African Skills Week came with some challenges, both to participants and to the organizing committee.



The participants faced the following major challenges:

- Little familiarity with the events' platform and difficulties in using computers and other digital devices to access and work on the platforms prevented many from successfully registering for the event and others from fully utilising the platform networking and collaboration features
- Low familiarity with zoom and video conferencing platforms in general and limited internet connectivity in some cases prevented some participants from taking part in all the discussion sessions and fully benefiting from the conference.
- The organizing committee faced the scepticism of people regarding the operationalisation of the event, mostly due to the innovative nature of the event and the fact that it was to take place entirely online.

2.3. Lessons Learnt

- Africa Skills Week 2022 mobilised academics, thought leaders, business leaders, young entrepreneurs, and the business community in Africa and around the world. The fact that the conference took place entirely online revealed the growing interest in the adoption and use of digital technologies across the continent.
- The credibility gained by the success of the 2022 edition is increasing the interest of the business community and other stakeholders for the future editions. They are poised to receive greater support from organizations and people interested by education and training on the continent and in the diaspora.
- Technically, the conference tested the AfroSkills digital events platform and proved that the platform is rife for hosting large-scale events, exchanges, and communication. The platform is fully open to the public for the organisation of conferences, trade fairs, workshops, seminars, and online competitions. It is accessible on:

<https://events.afroskills.org/en/>

2.4. Key Recommendations

To guarantee the success of the next editions of the Africa Skills Week, improvements are necessary in many areas. Concretely, it will take:

- Leveraging community of users and the growing mobilization capacity of AfroSkills, to reach more stakeholders inside and outside the continent, and find media and strategic partners, as well as sponsors that will support the organization of future editions; and
- Organizing the conference in a hybrid format (face-to-face and online), to increase the credibility and scope of the event and better mobilise and engage stakeholders.

3. DISCUSSION PANELS

Discussions took place on nine (09) major topics during the African Skills Week. The issues examined were related to workforce challenges of businesses, engagement of stakeholders, contribution of the African diaspora to human capital development and challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship in Africa.

TOPIC 1: WORKFORCE CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN BUSINESSES: CONSTRAINTS AND SOLUTIONS

08 December 2022: 11 a.m. -12 p.m. GMT

Panellists



Mr. Mislain Hakou

Lecturer-researcher in Information
and Communication Sciences,
Cameroon



Mr. Paul Betia

Director of Operations
AFROSKILLS, Cameroon

Moderation



Ms. Clarisse Wiydorven

Journalist - Consultant
AFROSKILLS, Cameroon

State of the play

The Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian crisis once more reminded us of the fragile situation of the economies and populations of Africa, especially those below the Sahara. Africans are increasingly falling into poverty with a huge and growing youths' population without a decent job. Citing the 2022 report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Mr HAKOU highlights that the working age population in Africa will be the highest in the world by 2050. He notes that every year, around 20 million of youths arrive on the labour market, but only a few get a decent job. Most of them are into precarious employments. This speaks to the fast-growing number of job seekers that ways outgrow number of jobs created despite efforts the revert the trend. Mr HAKOU notes however that while businesses do advertise vacancies, it is common to hear young graduate argue that they have not found a job because there are none. He things the main cause of this situation is the mismatch between the available jobs and candidates' profiles – that is at least what business leaders often say.

While businesses often advertise vacancies, it is common for young graduates to argue that they have not found a job because there is none

Mr. Mislain HAKOU

The chance of getting a job only materializes when an opportunity meets a corresponding profile. It is the construction of this profile that poses a problem in Africa.

Mr. Paul BETIA

For Mr BETIA, the availability of jobs is an undeniable reality on the continent. The chance to get one, only materializes on the occasion of “an opportunity meeting a corresponding profile. It is the construction of this profile that poses a problem in Africa. The deficit in skilled labour has its origins in the outdated education systems inherited when obtaining independence, and which cannot meet the skills' demands of the modern society.

Using the example of Cameroon, the panellists argue that the State has long favoured the training of public administrators to replace departing colonial western administrators and ensure continuity of public service. They emphasise more on the development of public administration skills to the detriment of the technical and practical skills necessary to create wealth and grow the economy.

Governments' efforts to develop and diversify human capital are unfortunately outpaced by economic growth. The economies need new skills, which the States cannot provide sufficiently. As a result, most youths lack the skills required to compete for the best jobs.

Population growth also contributes to exacerbating this situation, because the growing number of working age population increases the pressure on employers, who must not only create new jobs, but also find people with the skills required to fill those. To remedy this, companies that can, hire unqualified staff and invest in their training. This skills deficit deters business productivity and the competitiveness of the economies of African countries. The output per worker is weak, creating an additional barrier to investment, better known as the "learning curve barrier".

Solutions Pathways

Among the solutions, the speakers proposed:

- The need for synergy of action between the public and private sectors, to build training in line with the actual needs of the economic sector;
- The creation of concertation platforms with “business crossroads²²”, to identify and discuss challenges and propose strategies and solutions to skills’ development in every sectors of activity.
- The need to emphasize on cross-sectoral training, driven by digital technology, to help develop and leverage multisectoral skills.;

TOPIC 2: STAKEHOLDERS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT: ROLES, EXPECTATIONS, SYNERGIES AND PREROGATIVES

08 December 2022: 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. GMT

Panellists



Mr. Mislain Hakou
Lecturer-researcher in
Information and
Communication Sciences,
Cameroon



Ms. NGU ANU Alice
Lecturer-Researcher and
Business Consultant
Cameroon



Ms. ABIDI LEILA
Head of Development and Corporate
Relations
Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training
(ATFP), Tunisia.

Moderation



Clarisse Wiydorven

Journalist - Consultant
AFROSKILLS, Cameroon

State of the play

In the opinion of all the panellists’ stakeholders should not be ignored in the analysis of the entrepreneurship environment. Whether internal or external, with decision-making or influencing role,

²² The crossroad is a decision point for leaders to finally make your business one that you want—one that serves real value to real people, and that works for the business leade, <https://matterco.co/business-at-crossroads/>

stakeholders must be clearly defined, their roles determined, and their management optimized to guarantee efficient development of entrepreneurship.

In line with the objectives of Africa Skills Week, where entrepreneurship development occupies a central place, good management of stakeholders implies satisfying the expectations of the majority of the actors involved to increase value created.

Regarding definition and mapping of the stakeholders in the entrepreneurial project, Mrs. NGU ANU thinks that any entrepreneurial project is in an ecosystem connecting the interests of its promoter with those of all other parties – the stakeholders of the project. Entrepreneurship is the act of creating and sustaining a business and has many stages. A business begins with an idea, then follows creation, starting-up, coordination of production factors and financial risks taking, all with the aim to make profits. A stakeholder is a person who has an interest in a business at each or all of its stages.

In the same vein, Mrs. ABEDI, adds that in Tunisia, stakeholders are found in technical support and financing structures. Mr HAKOU on his side, identifies the Government as the most important stakeholder insofar as it initiates, designs and operationalises entrepreneurship policies in the country. To all the panellists, stakeholders are people and organisations, groups of people in the environment of the entrepreneurial project, who have an interest in its design, its materialisation, its operation and its results, namely: the State, the owner of the entrepreneurial project, banks, incubators, universities and vocational training centres, employers' organizations and other groups, suppliers, employees, customers, media, etc. "

Stakeholders are people and organisations and groups of people in the environment of a project that have an interest in its design, its materialization, its operation, and its results. The State being the most important stakeholder insofar as it initiates, designs and operationalises entrepreneurship policies in the country.

Regarding their roles, the kind of relationship between the stakeholders and the entrepreneurial project dictates the way they influence each other, directly or indirectly and obviously or not. Stakeholders may have conflicting interests, but ultimately, they are all concerned with the success or failure of the project, and the risks it incurs (legal, financial, managerial, etc.). They participate directly or indirectly in the design, definition, management, and governance of the project and influence its trajectory in the short, medium and long term.

Regarding employers, Mr HAKOU maintains that their role is among other things to encourage entrepreneurship, by promoting the emergence of talents and innovators, and by working in collaboration with the state to influence and contribute to the design and operationalisation of entrepreneurship policies. They must also work in synergy with the State, universities and vocational training centres to inform and contribute to the design and implementation of education and training programs that will equip youths with the skills needed by their businesses and for the development of the country.

As for the incubators, the panellists concur that their role is to promote entrepreneurship by detecting and supporting talents and innovators. At the time of digitalization, Ms. ABEDI highlights that incubators can be virtual or physical spaces that provide their service to ideas carriers and projects designers, in order to

help them materialise their projects and easily face competition. This is in essence what the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (TAVT) does.

Universities and vocational training centres should be the first point where entrepreneurship values are instilled in the youths, by designing and delivering programs that equip learners, future entrepreneurs and project designers with fundamental entrepreneurship knowledge and skills.

On the specific role of entrepreneurs in attracting more foreign direct investment in Africa, Ms. NGU ANU argues that areas that are of increasing interest to foreign investors are, among others, those of renewable energy, green marketing, fight against global warming. As such, the role of entrepreneurs could be to help governments in attracting investments in these promising areas by developing projects in these areas.

In the same vein, Mr HAKOU thinks that African governments are yet to make entrepreneurship a strategic and political priority. Even though entrepreneurship promotion is quite frequent in political discourses, actions for its materialization are still timid.

In summary, the panellists concur that the effective participation of stakeholders in entrepreneurship development requires a synergistic intervention in African countries. All lies in satisfying the expectations of most actors to create more value. The principle of responsibility vis-à-vis each other is thus essential to all stakeholders. In this sense, the political will of the States is the main vector that irradiate and pull together the participation of all the other stakeholders. For it to materialise, it is necessary for the State to consider entrepreneurship as a major development priority.

The political will of States irradiates and influence participation of all other stakeholders and the role of entrepreneurs could be to help governments attracting investment to promising sectors of the economy

Solutions Pathways

The panellists provided the following solutions pathway to accelerate entrepreneurship development in Africa in line with the objectives of the African Skills Week:

- Enhance stakeholders' collaboration;
- Provide incentives such as tax waivers for new businesses;
- Demonstrate stronger political commitment to developing entrepreneurship through the definition of priorities and identification and earmark of promising sectors for investments;
- Foster synergies between universities and vocational training centres and businesses.
- Integrate modules for development of entrepreneurial skills into education and vocational training programs;
- Promote creation of effective incubators;
- Ensure proper labelling and define norms and standards and clear processes to comply with them.
- Leverage digital technologies more efficiently to promote and develop entrepreneurship in Africa.

TOPIC 3: INNOVATION AND THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

December 08, 2022: 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. GMT

Panellists



**Mr. EZENWA
NWAGWU**

*Peering Advocacy and
Advancement Center In Africa,
Nigeria*



Mr. AKUM NDIP
Economist - Lecturer

*University Institute of the Gulf of
Guinea, Cameroon*



Mr. MBOFUNG JAVANS

*Entrepreneur & investor
Cameroon*

Moderation



Clarisse WIYDORVEN

*Journalist - Consultant
AFROSKILLS, Cameroon*

State of the Play

The fact that Africa has not been very successful in developing sustainable innovation models could be explained by the timid implication of the private sector to support government's actions and initiatives, especially in the recent fast changing technological environment. The trend is rather positive today: the continent is striving to catch up in terms of internet access and digital technologies. In the fields of health, finance, sustainable development, energy or agriculture, the African continent is experiencing significant involvement of the private sector and an attending exponential growth of innovations. This renewed dynamism has earned Africa the pseudonym of "laboratory of innovations". On the **definition of innovation and its integration in the African perspective**, Mr. MBOFUNG notes that Africa is exposed to a wide range of technological options to address its challenges of human capital development. However, Africa's ability to exploit these options is compromised by relative weaknesses in national innovation systems. Recalling that two of the

***Collection and analysis of data to
inform decisions is very weak in
agricultural processes and value
chains in most African countries***

Mr. Javans MBOFUNG

United Nations' sustainable development goals are the improvement of health and the eradication of poverty, Mr. MBOFUNG notes that innovations resulting from research can, for example, help to improve agricultural productivity. Unfortunately, most farmers in Africa think more about owning acres of land and very little about innovative solutions to improve farming practices and yields. In addition, data collection and analysis to inform decisions is rather very weak in the processes and value chains of the agricultural sector of most African countries. Likewise in the field of health, even if healthwise Africa was the least affected continent by Covid-19 pandemic, it nevertheless suffered the full brunt pandemic economically due to its low capacity for resilience to external shocks.

To give a connotation to the term "innovation" and show its importance in today's African society, Mr AKUM thinks it is important that Africa understands the world is moving towards business and innovation. This innovation can be examined from 3 angles: First, from the angle of sustainability, which requires the consolidation of existing markets before thinking about innovating and creating new markets. In this sense, we can use import-substitution, replacing imported goods by goods produced and consumed locally. Second, there is radical innovation characterised by the introduction of new approaches and products that will create new markets. Africa can create new products and new markets not only by innovating on the products but also in the marketing examining and creating ability to sell these innovations in Africa and elsewhere. Third is incremental innovation, which is adding to what already exists. Reference here is made to major entrepreneurs in Africa, such as the DANGOTE group that is very successful in this area.

Regarding the role of innovation in promoting development in Africa, Mr MBOFUNG highlights that development is the first thing innovation brings to any country or continent. Prioritizing innovation would mean improving the quality of life in Africa and reassuring Africa youths that it is possible to live in Africa and pursue their dreams.

Regarding importance of strong political will of African leaders to catalyse innovation, Mr. AKUM believes that good governance is essential, because ineffective governance hinders innovation by promoting favouritism, corruption, etc. In addition, stakeholders, namely government, entrepreneurs and business angels among others, should commit more to promoting innovation in Africa, especially by allocating more resources to innovative projects. Adding to the foregoing, Mr. MBOFUNG believes that the inferiority complex towards other regions and the eroding confidence in the governments are major obstacles to the contribution to innovation and to unleashing the potential of youths to contribute to the development of the continent. In

Good governance promotes innovation. It obstructs favoritism, corruption, etc.

Mr. AKUM Ndip

Innovation is a vocation. It takes self-sacrifice and perseverance, not always hoping for immediate support, and always trying to make one's little contribution.

short, the panellists argue that innovation is a vocation. It takes self-sacrifice and perseverance, not always hoping for immediate support, and always trying to make a small contribution. If the efforts are recognized, so much the better. If not, it is worth considering that a family member, a friend, someone from our community or someone from another part of the world will take up our idea, use it to see it through to the end and solve a problem that we have tried to solve.

Solutions Pathways

In line with the objectives of the African Skills Week, the following solutions pathways would help improving the innovation landscape on the continent:

- Commit more resources to scientific and technological research;
- Improve and expand data collection and analysis mechanisms to facilitate computer-aided decisions and guide research and innovation needs in priority areas such as agriculture and health;
- Enhance engagement of stakeholders by communicating more on the need, existence, and benefits of new technologies.
- Reduce dependence on external aid and increase domestic investment in research and innovation in agriculture, education, health, etc.
- Scale up adoption of online education and training to accommodate more people in less time and at lower cost;
- Scale up support to young innovators. This support, from government and private sector, can take the form of training, improvement of legal and policy frameworks, financial support, etc.

TOPIC 4: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

December 9, 2022: 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Panellists



Dr. AKASSI KANGA
Linguist and entrepreneur
France



Dr. NFOR NAPOLEON
Veterinary / Advisor
STEAMS, Cameroun



Mr. HAKOU MISLAIN
Lecturer-researcher in Information and
Communication Sciences, Cameroon



Ms. FERIEL EZZINE BOUDEN
Director General
*Tunisian Agency for Vocational
Training (ATEP), Tunisia*



Prof. KANDA NTUMBA Jean Marie
Dean of the Polytechnic Faculty
University of Lubumbashi, DRC



Mr. RADHI MAAOUI
ICT Project Manager
*Tunisian National Center for
Technologies in Education (CNTE), Tunisia*

Moderation



Mr. Christian NLEND
Manager and Specialist in Legal and
Operational Risk Management
SREM Consulting, Cameroon

State of the Play

The future challenge of human capital development and management in Africa was at the centre of the discussions of the 4th panel of experts of the African Skills Week 2022. The need for a reform of training and skills' development strategies in Africa was recognized and emphasised by all the speakers. They all agree on the fact that education, knowledge, adaptation, orientation, health and innovation are endogenous factors of development and that political will and synergy between stakeholders of education and training are fundamental to the development of African countries.

It is essential for countries to identify the professions that they will need in the future and to define a skills' directory, which together with the professions directory will allow the learner to acquire the skills needed by the economy at various future horizons.

Prof. Jean Marie KANDA

On the divide between the training offered and the skills needed by the economy, Dr KANGA notes

it is necessary to distinguish the training that allows to acquire mere knowledge from the training that equips with Know-how, allowing to use the knowledge to solve problems.

Dr Akassi KANGA

that education and training curricula poorly align with the skills needed by the job market. As a result, most youths leave school with certificates but without the skills sought by employers. To improve alignment, it is necessary to distinguish the training that allows to acquire mere knowledge from the training that equips with Know-how, allowing to use knowledge to solve problems.

There is need for deep reflexion on the training provided in training schools and universities, on the choice of training and the orientation and training system for obtaining specific skills. In which case, the high-rate of unemployment of young African graduates will persist for years to come.

For Mr. HAKOU, the solution would lie in collaboration among public authorities, schools, and businesses, through the formulation of concerted policies and design of concerted training programs. Sharing the experience from Tunisia, Ms. BOUDEN highlights the model validated by the State,

Skills development must follow a life-cycle approach, from cradle to grave to allow seizing opportunities for reskilling.

Prof. Jean Marie KANDA

businesses and training institutions based on alternance (dual study) between a school and a company. In this sense, the means and standards by which a company can participate as trainer are well defined. Expatriating on the divide between training received in schools and skills needed in the business world, Prof. KANDA underscored that skills development should follow a life-cycle approach, from cradle to grave in

order to seize the opportunities for reskilling to fill skills' gap. He also highlighted the importance of equal opportunity, that is to say, the need to ensure that every African has the opportunity to access knowledge any time and everywhere without discrimination.

Prof. KANDA also emphasized on the quality of training. To him, it is important to identify a directory of trades and professions in African countries. Though some countries already have one, most of them are outdated or overtaken by events. However, these professions can be linked to a skills directory that lists the skills required for each trade or profession. Thus, the professions and skills directories together

would allow the learner to acquire the skills demanded by the economy. To this end, it is essential for countries to identify the professions that they will need in the short, medium and longer terms.

Adding to foregoing, Mr. MAAOUI thinks that it is necessary to emphasize on skills' development in technological fields. For it, effective national strategies for technological skills development are needed

We must emphasise on the development of technological skills to reduce the digital divide

Mr MAAOUI RHADI

to reduce the digital divide in education. It entails building the capacity of teachers and trainers in the use of technologies, to support teaching.

To round it up, Dr NFOR adds that every individual has an inner talent, which is also valid for all Africans. Africa's main challenge in training and skills development is the lack of guidance or inadequate guidance starting in the families. Generally, children go to school without clear orientation or purpose. Dr NFOR also highlighted the importance of training students with the aim of making them to understand and develop the environment in which they live. It is only in this way that they will be able to address the real problems of Africa.

It is important to train students with the aim of making them to understand and develop the environment in which they live. It is only this way that they will be able address the real problems of Africa

Dr Napoleon NFOR

Solutions Pathways

In the view of improving training and skills' development in Africa and in line with the objectives of the Africa Skills Week, the panellists proposed the following solutions pathways:

- Help young African graduates and trainees to become more self-aware and aware of their environment, their problems, their origins, and their life purpose;
- Africanise (facilitate expansion on the continent) African languages, which Africans would identify with - KISWALI, for example, which is already widespread in East Africa;
- Better contextualize teaching and capacity building programs and delivery methods;
- Place human capital at the heart of development policies - distinguishing training that allows to acquire knowledge for acquiring sake, and training that equips with Know-how, allowing to use the knowledge to solve problems.
- Give literacy a second chance: today there is a need to acquire and valorise digital skills more than in the past decades. A category of African active population was not sufficiently exposed to digital technologies nor given the opportunity to acquire digital competency. They must be given a second chance to become digitally literate and for this, strategies may involve free or affordable training fees supported by grants.
- Involve the private sector in the design and operationalisation of education and training policies and programs.

TOPIC 5 : STRATEGIES FOR FINANCING TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

December 09, 2022: 11 a.m. -12h30 p.m. GMT

Panelists



DR. KANGA AKASSI Léonie
Linguist and Entrepreneur
France



Prof. KANDA NTUMBA Jean Marie
Dean of Polytechnic Faculty
University of Lubumbashi, DRC

Moderation



Mme Fouth NEDI
Journalist - Consultant
AFROSKILLS, Cameroun

State of the Play

While all speakers recognise that African youths have the potential of becoming the greatest continental and global production and innovation factor, they also note that realisation of this potential is conditioned by equipping this youths with quality and relevant skills. This fundamentally requires enormous investment in training and skills' development. So far, in African countries, public authorities provide majority of the financing for education and training. In most of these countries, education and training conflict with other state's priorities, reducing therefore the size of the enveloped dedicated to education and training and resulting to regrettable underfunding of education and training.

**Most States channel ways more
sesources to other sectors
leaving education and training
underfunded**

Dr Akassi KANGA

According to Dr KANGA, to draw more investments into education, while receiving support from development partners, African countries should also strongly encourage domestic investments. Local entrepreneurs and wealthy Africans should be encouraged to invest in human capital development. Their contributions will help to better contextualise policies and programs to equip graduates with the skills needed by the job market so that they will more effectively contribute to the development of Africa.

For Prof. KANDA, the fact that African states are yet to consider education and training as drivers of economic prosperity could justify the underfunding situation. States are slow to realise strong dependence of economic development on skills' development. It appears that states in Africa emphasise on having more graduates rather than more skilled people.

Taking the example of the DRC, Prof. KANDA highlights that the strategy adopted to finance skills development in the electronics field, mainly in the assembly of battery devices, was to strengthen the country's ambition to attract investors in the manufacturing of battery precursors, since the DRC is well endowed with strategic minerals for these batteries. Also, the effectiveness of the means to finance education and training in Africa should be judged by their ability to provide appropriate responses to the needs of businesses and the society.

It is not enough to generate statistics on number of graduates produced, it is also necessary that the latter are able to be productive, and above all, have know-how, beyond knowledge.

Prof. Jean Marie KANDA

According to Dr KANGA, financing education and training in Africa is a mammon trapped in its old habits. Countries rely a lot on support from international organisations. Continuous education and training policies are surprisingly absent, inappropriate, or obsolete. In addition, existing policies are incoherent and more often devoid of continuity - to each minister his or her reforms. Dr KANGA further underscores

Financing education and training in Africa is a mammon that is trapped in its old habits. Countries rely a lot on support from international organizations. Getting African entrepreneurs to finance training and skills development requires a "Metanoia", i.e. a radical change of mindset

Dr Akassi KANGA

that today, new financing strategies involve outsourcing agents, that are intermediaries between the employers and job seekers. Some structures invest in training and upskilling to produce sure values that they can resell to employers with a margin. However, the challenge here is that not all job-seekers have access to these opportunities. She goes on to emphasize that getting African entrepreneurs and businesses to finance training and skills development requires a "metanoia" - a radical

change of mindset. She thinks, education and training institutions can collaborate with businesses through charters or partnership agreements, to attract more investment in education and training, and therefore foster economic growth. These charters or agreements may include clauses to promote the partner company by highlighting its contribution (mention them in all communication related to their programs), so that the company benefits from publicity and is acknowledged for its actions – especially today that Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) issues are gaining momentum beyond traditional Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Solutions Pathways

With the view of unlocking financing of education and training in Africa and in line with the objectives of the Africa Skills Week, the speakers formulated the following recommendations:

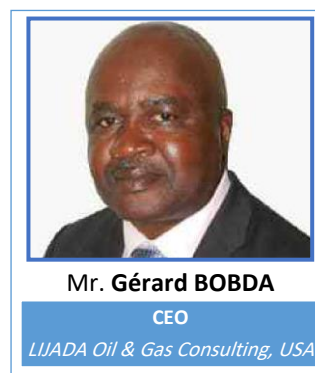
- Broaden the financiers' base to upscale private sector's contributions;
- Establish directory of trades and professions in African countries;

- Create a synergy of action that involves public authorities, the private sectors, research institutes, universities and training institutes;
- Strengthen efforts to mobilise local actors to support the governments in adopting models that are suited to the needs of employers and the socio-economic development of African countries;
- Promote crowdfunding (crowdfunding, Business Angels, etc.), to expand possibilities for investment in education, training and job creation;
- Establish consortia led by civil society, renowned African personalities or organisations, to strengthen the African Alliance for Vocational Training (ADEFOP) and complement it with aspects relating to education and skills development;
- Improve focus of African countries on value chains of strategic sectors such as extractives, agricultural and manufacturing to better organise financing of sectoral skills.

TOPIC 6: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

December 09, 2022: 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. GMT

Panellists



Moderation



State of the Play

In a challenging ecosystem characterized by inadequate skills, high barriers to investment, sluggish business climate, insufficient hardware and broadband connectivity, and many other constraints to entrepreneurship, African businesses have the merit of being able to innovate in order to create jobs and wealth. However, these innovations are far from being the result of research and development (R&D) activities. They primarily stem from the adoption, adaptation and reproduction of methods and technologies created elsewhere via learning and assimilation.

La recherche et développement c'est l'ensemble des actions qu'on mène pour découvrir la future étape ou le futur domaine d'existence, de commerce et d'application des choses qu'on met en place ».

M Gérard BOBDA

Looking at **Research and Development (R&D)**, Mr. BOPDA, thinks it is the foundation of the survival of an organisation whatever its field of activity. Referring to the field of Information Technology, he underscores that Content Management System (CMS) emerged quite slowly, but it is now widely adopted and used. Organisations had to reinvent themselves and adapt to changes thanks to R&D efforts.

Organisations that were unable to adapt disappeared or were absorbed by more flexible ones through Mergers and acquisitions along the way - implying that R&D is the set of actions carried out to discover the future needs of businesses and implement measures to satisfy those needs. It justifies the fact that most century-old companies have a very advanced R&D department from which African businesses and countries should learn.

In the same vein, Dr FOSSI supports that R&D is important for the African continent, in the sense that all development actions require some form of research. Research provides data and information to better foresee what the future will look like. New situations and trends best emerge with adequate planning. We cannot prosper in a very dynamic world without solid R&D applied to our development needs. R&D results are essential to inform decisions for today and tomorrow.

We cannot strive in a fast-evolving world without a R&D applied to our actual development needs.

Dr Yannick FOSSI

Regarding the challenges faced by African researchers in the technological field, Mr. BOPDA believes that R&D is used in the industry to solve emerging problems. The goal of any research is to market its products in order to improve either the lives of individuals or the performance of businesses and other organisations. These two goals form the guiding principles of any R&D work. If a research project does not provide visibility on its benefits, it goes without saying it that the project will not be undertaken, and resources will be directed to other projects with more promising benefits. One of the major challenges is the definition of research boundaries

African researchers face multiple challenges including shortage of financial and human resources and lack of equipment

M Gérard BOBDA

and requirements. In the extractive industry where Mr BOBDA has a vast experience, there are technical challenges of depth, temperature, pressure, etc. Another challenge is the estimation and mobilisation of the resources that the researcher will need. It is not just about financial resources, which are indeed very important, but also about human resources and equipment to carry out the research project to the end. Adding to the difficulties encountered by Africans in R&D, Dr FOSSI highlights that the realities are completely different depending on whether the researcher is on the continent or outside the continent. It is so because research policies are not identical. Today, what is prominent in Africa but less seen elsewhere, is the inadequate planning and definition of expected results; and a wide divide between the research goals and countries' development needs. Corroborating this point, Mr. BOBDA adds that a tour of laboratories in African universities will reveal the lack of clarity on the priorities of the university in terms of R&D. He also notes insufficient communication on the research activities, especially on their goals, objectives and the prototyping of their products. Whether it is a demonstration farm, lab tests or other projects to demonstrate the results and the benefits of the research carried out, collaboration among the state, businesses and universities is key to purposeful R&D.

The wide divide between the research objectives and countries' development needs is a challenge that requires closer collaboration among the state, universities and businesses to overcome.

To this collaboration, Mr BOBDA also adds that it is possible to scale up the contribution of businesses to the development of technological research. However, in the context of most African countries, this research should principally aim at promoting local raw materials and products, and meeting the needs of

Beyond the involvement of businesses, first, there should be adequate policies to promote R&D - one will hardly invest in R&D without incentive

Mr. Gérard BOBDA

Africa's populations. Beyond the involvement of businesses, first, there should be adequate policies to promote R&D - one will hardly invest in R&D without incentive. While R&D's goal is to improve peoples' living conditions, attainment of this goal is foremost the responsibility of the government. Dr FOSSI adds that priority areas of R&D in Africa are well-known by decisionmakers and policymakers. These include agriculture and health, among others.

Solutions Pathways

With the aim of contributing to unlock Research and Development in Africa and in line with the vision of the Africa Skills Week, speakers recommended the following solutions' pathways:

- Define the real needs of Africa in order to better direct R&D efforts, by carrying out an analysis of needs and taking appropriate measures to satisfy these needs through R&D;
- Rethink or reform R&D policies in Africa, to enable researchers to better direct their works towards resolving development problems of the continent;
- Provide adequate working conditions to researchers so that they will also have an obligation of result;
- Make R&D a priority and invest in it adequately because it produces the "raw materials for today's and tomorrow's decision-making".
- Design R&D policies that preserve national interests;
- Multiply schools of applied sciences.

TOPIC 7: STRATEGIES FOR FINANCING RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

December 09, 2022: 3 p.m. - 4 p.m. GMT.

Panellist



Dr. Felix Idongesit OYOSORO
Lecturer & Researcher
Department of History and
International Relations
Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria

Moderation



Mr. Jerome BIDJANG
Journalist - Consultant
AFROSKILLS, Cameroon

State of the Play

African technological innovation suffers from insufficient investment in Research & Development, even though the continent has a multitude of scientific talents. The shortage of investment in R&D contributes to the continent's inability to develop, for example, effective treatments and vaccines against most common tropical diseases. The main consequence of underfunding is the continent's inability to position well in the global market. But, like elsewhere in the world, African countries have explored different approaches, institutional reforms, models, and mechanisms for more efficient and effective investment in research and innovation. New dynamic funding models have been developed, adopted, and rolled out across the world and sectors to close the R&D funding gap. These models that include partnerships and co-financing are multidisciplinary and aim to ensure effective and efficient use of scarce resources in every context.

Africa is still very far from imposing what it has, its ideas and its technical know-how on the world.

Dr. Felix Idongesit OYOSORO

Furthermore, Dr. OYOSORO thinks that, by leapfrogging adoption of digitalisation through mobile payments in its development vision, Africa stands as example to some other regions in the world. But the impact is yet to be commensurate with the efforts and investments because of the unpreparedness of most of the countries. Africa seems to still be very far from the point where it can impose what it has, its ideas and its know-how on the world. The expert argues that financing Research & Development is essential but still timid in African countries. He notes that there is no technologically advanced country that has not sufficiently invested in R&D. Indeed, in other regions,

Financing Research & Development is essential but still lacking in African countries, yet adequate investment in R&D creates a catalytic effect on other sectors of the economy .

Dr Felix Idongesit OYOSORO

Africa seems to still be very far from the point where it can impose what it has, its ideas and its know-how on the world.

Dr Felix Idongesit OYOSORO

adequate investment in R&D provided the knock-on effect for other economic sectors. The weak financing of R&D is seen as one of the weak links in the continent's development vision. Nevertheless, Dr OYOSSORO thinks that strategies to scale up R&D financing in Africa are within African countries' reach. Investing in R&D will create spin-offs that will have a catalytic effect on other aspects of the economy.

Solutions Pathways

In line with the objectives of Africa Skills Week, the speaker proposed following solutions pathways for Governments, private sectors and development partners to leverage their access to global intellectual and financial resources and their convening power to avail human and financial resources for the various stages of R&D in Africa:

- Establish an R&D office in each ministry and state-owned enterprises (SOE);
- Create R&D weeks, as pilot platforms to regulate R&D activities;
- Demonstrate more political will to invest in R&D, by opening up countries to R&D investments and creating catalytic effects with adequate incentives;
- Create a favourable environment to spur research and development in the countries;
- Analyse the pillars of investment in R&D, its strengths and weaknesses and strengthen the legal framework to create large markets for the accommodation of R&D products in Africa.
- Identify and highlight alternative R&D financing mechanisms.
- Emphasize the attractiveness of promising areas in the countries.
- Create an investments-friendly environment by ensuring a fair market to everyone.

TOPIC 8: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA

December 10, 2022: 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (GMT-1)

Panellists



Mr. Richard AGYEKUM

CEO

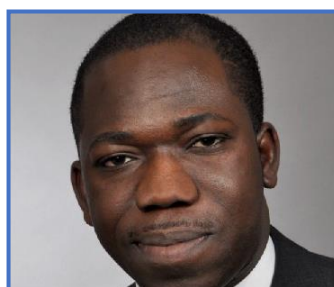
Experts Skills, Ghana



Mr. SALIFU ALI

Executive Director

*Africa Center for Development
and Social Innovation (ACDSI),
Ghana*



Mr. Alexander OWOLABI

Co-founder

*Make-it-Wow! Surprises & Japa.run
Germany*

Moderation



Clarisse WIYDORVEN

Journalist, consultant

AFROSKILLS, Cameroon

State of the Play

Doing business in Africa is equal to walking in an obstacle's field. Obstacles are of different types: unfavourable business environment, cumbersome administrative procedures, challenging political context, shortage of manpower, as well as the inertia related to culture and social fabric. These obstacles are common to African entrepreneurs, whether they are new or advanced in business.

Yet, with a potential of around \$6.6 billion in 2021, no expert dares underestimate the value of start-ups on the continent. Youths in Africa increasingly consider entrepreneurship as the ideal way to escape unemployment. Entrepreneurship is presented as one of the most sustainable options for job creation in Africa. It is a key to economic growth and relies on the huge untapped youths' potential that could take the African continent to its next phase of development. The African youth is fast growing in number and constitutes a promising asset for the continent's development. However, these youths have to be empowered and supported to unleash their potential so that they are transformed into a real factor of development.

Also, according to Mr. AGYEKUM, talking only about the problems is not a winning strategy. It is rather interesting to convene practical measures to be taken by governments and other stakeholders to address the issue of corporate financing in Africa. He notes that Africa has 1.3 billion inhabitants, India about 1.2 billion and China about 1.4 billion. These figures represent powerful economic levers. However, what differentiates China and India from Africa is that the two are countries and thus, capitalize on these numbers without trade barriers and need for regional integration frameworks – making thus their large populations a greater asset for economic development. Whereas Africa is a continent with many countries and trade barriers both related to policies and legal framework and insufficient physical infrastructure such as roads,

Just speaking about the problems is not a winning strategy. It is rather interesting to talk about the practical measures to be taken by governments and other stakeholders to solve the problem of business financing in Africa. The 1.3 billion Africans constitute an economic lever that relies on the AfCFTA for its effectiveness.

Mr. Richard AGYEKUM

Startups need to do more research to identify and solve real economic problems and avoid investing time, and money in products and services that are not in demand.

Mr. Ali SALIFU

railways, air connectivity, IT infrastructure, etc. So, the operationalisation and effectiveness of the AfCFTA is eagerly awaited to convert Africa large youths' population into a real economic lever.

While financing gap is a challenge that cannot be overlooked, Mr. SALIFU, thinks that most start-ups, in particular newbie entrepreneurs do not do enough research although research helps identifying and solving economic problems. Indeed, research will help an entrepreneur to

avoid investing time and money in products or services that are not in demand.

On another note, Mr. OWOLABI thinks that African governments could initiate organic or practical reforms to promote entrepreneurship in Africa. First, a mandatory fee can be imposed on all businesses depending on their income levels. The sums collected can be invested each year in R&D and training programs, among other things. Second, they could reform education and higher education in particular to adapt curricula to entrepreneurship requirements. Mr. AGYEKUM adds that it is imperative to examine the practical solutions to be deployed as a continent, starting from the simple discussion of the challenges of entrepreneurship in Africa to the exploitation or the development available resources.

Reforms are needed to promote entrepreneurship in Africa. It is necessary to encourage the participation of businesses in financing training and R&D and in adapting training programs to entrepreneurial requirements

Mr. Alexander OWOLABI

Solutions Pathways

In line with the vision of the Africa Skills Week, speakers proposed solutions to governments, private sector, and development partners to facilitate and support the development of entrepreneurship in Africa:

- Make the most of the precious asset represented by the continent's youth population.
- Research and identify the needs of the African market in terms of products and services and their quantity and quality standards.
- Re-examine knowledge management policies in the public and private sectors to prescribe measures for improvement;
- Undertake reforms to ensure equal access to markets;
- Examine the possibility of policies harmonization to accelerate trade and development in Africa;
- Make the most of the continental payment or compensation systems such as the PAPSS (Pan-African Payment and Settlement System) as a practical solution allowing efficient and secure circulation of money across borders to facilitate payments in Africa – thanks to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA),;
- Democratise digital payments in economic transactions in Africa.

TOPIC 9: DOING BUSINESS HOME: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

December 10, 2022: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. GMT

Panellists



Dr. Florentin SAHA KAMTA
Manager
Training, and quality (medical device), Germany



Dr. Valentine AMBE
Entrepreneur
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State of the Play

When it comes to investing in their countries and on the continent, African entrepreneurs are proving very creative and smart with their innovative ideas and their resilience in very challenging environments. Despite this goodwill, the conversion rate of business ideas into successful start-ups and thriving businesses is significantly low compared to other parts of the world. Indeed, African entrepreneurs deplore the unfavourable conditions that penalise their initiatives. Many cite limited access to the right information and the absence of right partners, collaborators or interlocutors, among the main obstacles that aggravate the structural challenges of raising funds, access to technology, protection of intellectual property and the scarcity of competent workforce.

According to Dr. AMBE, African Diaspora has been the subject of many discussions regarding its definition and contributions to the construction of Africa. He things an African diaspora is a person who has left Africa either to acquire skills, wealth, talent or to further develop those already acquired at home.

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Dr. Valentine AMBE

This diaspora represents an economic, political, mental, physical, emotional, financial and manpower reservoir that can stimulate the development of Africa. The African diaspora is a special asset, to which the continent must give high consideration because it represents a reservoir of talent and enormous economic and social capital.

Adding to that, Dr. SAHA KAMTA believes that people qualified as African Diaspora should be extended to second and third generation of African migrants. It seems that even the African Union (AU) does not really take them into account. These people represent an important human resource on which the continent can rely. However, the question is whether Africa is ready to open its doors to this diaspora.

Regardless their generations, the diaspora faces the same challenges in contributing to the economic development of African countries. Dr. AMBE believes when it comes to developing business and economic autonomy on the African continent, the first challenge faced by the diaspora is visa restrictions for entering the country where they would like to do business. This is compounded by the unfavourable and uncertain fiscal and political uncertainties. These challenges combine to create an atmosphere of insecurity - hindering to economic development, financial expansion, technology and industrialization. People will not invest where there is insecurity and political and fiscal uncertainties.

The notion of diaspora should be extended to second and third generation of migrants and put in place favorable policies and ensure transparency to encourage the financing of entrepreneurial projects by the diaspora in Africa

Dr. Florentin SAHA KAMTA

Therefore, Dr. KAMTA thinks that favourable policies and assurance of transparency can promote diaspora investments in Africa. They encourage entrepreneurial spirit, which involves accepting failure, finding ways to stand up to try again and talking about the challenges and the means to overcome them. It involves looking for solutions to problems and talking about these solutions to inform and motivate others to dare.

The African culture is marked by a sacrosanct solidarity that should form the basis of initiatives and investments of the diaspora on the continent. It would be wise to pool funds for large-scale projects through crowdfunding thanks to digital platforms

Anne Sylvie GNABEHI

Emphasizing on the challenges and opportunities of the diaspora in financing businesses in Africa, Ms. GNABEHI notes that it is very difficult for the diaspora to carry out large-scale and capital-intensive projects individually. The African culture is characterised by a sacrosanct solidarity that should form the basis for the development of initiatives and investments of the diaspora on the continent. Mrs. GNABEHI thinks that it would be wise to pool funds through participatory financing

mechanisms such as crowdfunding. Even if this participative financing is not yet popular among the

African diaspora, it is necessary to promote it, insofar as it ensures legal and physical security of funds and helps addressing the issue of mistrust among the diasporas. She things, crowdfunding can be setup through digital fundraising or fund management platforms.

Solutions Pathways

In line with the vision of Africa Skills Week, the following solutions were proposed as initiatives to be undertaken for the diaspora to truly play its role in the development of Africa:

- Improve mutual trust within the African Diaspora;
- Establish permanent consultation frameworks and platforms with African governments;
- Overcome the legal and fiscal challenges to diaspora entrepreneurship on the continent;
- Multiply discussions platforms on the role of the diaspora in the development of Africa;
- Develop strong and trusted business partnerships with local partners on the continent.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

Africa faces an immense skills' gap when qualified human resources are highly needed to pursue the Africa Union's vision of transformative development by 2063. According to the S&P Global Ratings of August 2021, Africa's working-age population (between 15 and 64 years old), will increase by more than 200%, to exceed 1.1 billion by 2050. The challenge is to provide this immense pool of potential human capital with the education and skills needed to drive sustainable socio-economic growth. Meeting this challenge will require advancing knowledge and skills strategies through reforming human capital development policies and firmly anchoring them in national knowledge and value systems. The synergy amongst policymakers, universities, vocational training centres, development partners, the private sector and civil society is key. The contributions made during this week dedicated to African skills reemphasized the need and urgency for:

- Designing, reviewing and Policy to ensure that they are anchored in national human capital development strategies;
- Strengthening the supply of skills in strategic and innovation sectors ;
- Ensuring that youths are equipped with the skills required by employers and to support political, social and economic development;
- Emphasizing R&D in economic, trade and industrialization policies to produce results that meet the specific needs of Africa;
- Exploring new mechanisms and tools to fund skills development in Africa;
- Upscaling the contribution of the African Diaspora in providing training and financing skills' development on the continent

In line with the above needs and urgencies, it was recognized that the 2022 edition of the Africa Skills Week has succeeded in proposing concrete solutions pathways to close the skills' gap in Africa. However, these solution pathways must be followed by implementation initiatives that strongly rely on the synergy amongst stakeholders and technical and financial supporting measures.

4.2. Recommendations

Anchoring on the foregoing conclusions, the experts provided the following key recommendations to advance knowledge and skills strategies in Africa:

- The high need for synergy of action between public authorities, universities, vocational training canterers and the professional world, to build and provide training adapted to the real needs of African economies;
- The creation of exchanging and benchmarking frameworks, crossroads of professions, and an alliance of African skills (or strengthen existing ones) to propose strategies and solutions for developing sectors-specific skills, in order to anticipate future skills needs and align training offers with technological and economic developments in line with the AU Agenda 2063;
- The intensification of investments in R&D to improve and extend the mechanisms for collecting and analysing data, computerize decisions and guide skills needs in priority areas such as agriculture, health and education;

- Intensify support to young innovators through business and innovation incubators and policy advocacy. The support can take the form of training, improvement of legal frameworks, search for technical and financial partners, etc.;
- Africanise African languages (expand their use on the content) to allow young African graduates and learners to exchange and improve their knowledge on their environment, their problems, their origins and their purposes;
- Broaden the base of investors in education and training to entrepreneurs and corporations and use alternative mechanisms for financing training and R&D, such as crowdfunding (crowdfunding, Business Angels, etc.) ;
- Capitalize on the PAPSS system (Pan-African Payment and Settlement System), as a practical solution allowing the efficient and secure circulation of funds, through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to initiate legal reforms facilitating regional investments in skills development in Africa;
- Establish permanent consultation frameworks, to address legal and fiscal challenges, and improve business environment to resolve the issue of lack of trust to scale up investments from the diaspora and promote development of strong commercial partnerships between the diapora local partners on the continent.

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6. ANNEXES

Annex 1: The Experts

- **Mr. Mislain Hakou**, Lecturer-Researcher in Information and Communication Science & Marketing and Communication Consultant - Cameroon;
- **Mr. Paul Betia, Director of Operations at Afroskills - Cameroon;**
- **Ms. NGU ANU Alice**, Lecturer-Researcher & Business Management Consultant - Cameroon;
- **Ms. ABIDI LEILA**, Head of Development and Business Relations Division at the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP) - Tunisia;
- **Mr. EZENWA NWAGWU**, Executive Director Peering Advocacy and Advancement Center In Africa – Nigeria;
- **Mr. AKUM NDIP**, Lecturer at the University Institute of Golf of Guinea/Economist-Cameroon;
- **Mr. MBOFUNG JAVANS**, Teacher, entrepreneur, currency expert, agricultural investor - Cameroon;
- **Dr. Akassi Léonie KANGA**, linguist, Entrepreneur, sensitive to issues relating to human resources - France;
- **Dr. Nfor Napoleon, Veterinarian / STEAMS Advisor - Cameroon;**
- **Ms. Feriel Ezzine Bouden**, Director of International Cooperation at the Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP) – Tunisia;
- **Pr. KANDA NTUMBA Jean Marie**, Dean of the Polytechnic Faculty of the University of Lubumbashi. Doctor, Civil Engineer in Industrial Chemistry - Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);
- **Mr Radhi Maaoui**, Project Manager of ICT integration programs in the learning process and development of digital resources at the Tunisian National Center for Technologies in Education (CNTE) - Tunisia;
- **Dr Fossi Yannick**, Research Engineer at IFREMER - France;
- **Mr. Gérard BOBDA**, CEO, LIJADA Oil & Gas Consulting - USA;
- **Dr. Felix Idongesit OYOSORO**, Lecturer in the Department of History and International Relations, Veritas University Abuja - Nigeria;
- **Mr. Richard AGYEKUM**, CEO Experts Skills - Ghana;
- **Mr. SALIFU ALI**, Executive Director of the African Center for Development and Social Innovation (ACDSI) - Ghana;
- **Mr. Alexander OWOLABI**, Co-founder of Make-it-Wow! Surprises & Japa.ru – Germany;
- **Dr Florentin SAHA KAMTA**, Training and Quality Manager (medical devices) - Germany;
- **Dr. Valentine AMBE**, Entrepreneur - Cameroon;
- **Ms. Anne Sylvie GNABEHI**, Entrepreneur, Founder of APEN Media Consulting Asbl, President of the NGO, MAYERA Pour L'Enfance - Belgium

Annex 2: Summary of 2022 edition of the Africa Business Ideas Competition (ABIC 2022)

The African business ideas competition (ABIC), is organized yearly by AfroSkills to meet, identify and support innovative and entrepreneurial ideas carried by African students, entrepreneurs, and researchers. The competition takes place in French and English and focuses on the entrepreneurship of the fourth industrial revolution. All sectors of activity are concerned: agro-industry, energy, digital transformation, art and culture, nutrition and health, environment and sanitation, mechanics and robotics, real estate, etc. Promising projects benefit from the support of AfroSkills for their maturation and the search for funding, through AfroSkills' online business and innovations' incubation platform, RABAWA, which means "sharing" in Hausa, one of the most spoken languages in Africa.

The first edition organized in 2022 attracted projects from 15 African countries: The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Chad, Zambia, Mauritania, Niger, Benin, Gabon, Burkina Faso and Uganda. Out of 383 applications, only 120 projects passed the acceptance criteria on the Competition platform. Eligible projects were assessed by experts with both sectoral and project development skills.

The competition began with the preliminary rounds, qualifying to the quarterfinals, which like the semi-finals and the final took place during the African skills week. 40 candidates reached the quarterfinals, 20 the semi-finals and 10 the final. Three laureates emerged from the final, closing the ASW 2022. They received their prizes soon after the deliberations.

- **The first prize, 2500 Euros, was awarded to the SOTILMA project led by two Senegalese students: Samba THIOUBE and Bineta DIALLO.** The project consists of optimising water management in agricultural and industrial installations thanks to a smart water meter, controlled remotely with or without internet. It allows the user to automatically open and close the valves via a mobile application over a distance up to 2 km for small installations and 7 km for large installations.
- **The second prize, 1500 euros, was awarded to the TRANSPLACA project led by Inès MUNGAZI, a young entrepreneur from the Democratic Republic of Congo.** The project consists of transforming plastic waste into fuel (diesel) through pyrolysis.
- **The third prize, 1000 euros, was awarded to the leader of the Kwasu Vr Tours project, led by Vera KWASU, a young Zambian entrepreneur.** The project consists of allowing tourists to discover a destination without physically visiting it thanks to virtual reality tools.