Africa Venture

The Africa Venture is an annual pan-African leadership programme which assembles exceptional emerging leaders from government, businesses and non-profits across Africa.

The programme enables the transfer of knowledge, know-how and inspiration across generations, involving some of the most inspiring leaders in the world today. It creates a new generation of African leaders who have the Cultural Intelligence to work fluidly and flexibly across the continent, who have the analytical and creative skills to use diversity to spark innovation, and who have extraordinarily broad African networks.

Through a four-phase programme of blended learning, the Africa Venture focuses on applied leadership learning. An important issue for the continent is identified and presented to participants as a Challenge. As they work on this, it encourages the participants to develop practical and innovative approaches to leadership. In the process, they build relationships with an exceptional African peer group. In 2021, the programme looked at the Challenge:

“How can we use technological innovation to improve healthcare in Africa?”

Having worked together on the pan-African Challenge, participants go on to support each other in working on a challenge in their own environments, bringing the leadership learning to bear and creating powerful shifts in their current, real-world contexts.

COVID-19 adaptations:

Due the pandemic rendering in-person delivery impractical, the 2020 programme had an extended Phase 1 comprising of asynchronous content and monthly webinars with leaders from across the continent. The 2020 and 2021 cohorts were then merged for the fully online delivery of the programme, with two asynchronous phases and two intensive, dynamic, synchronous phases.
2021 highlights

What happened in Phases 1 and 3?

In the first phase, participants began their leadership journey by introducing themselves and beginning to build a rich array of relationships.

In these largely asynchronous phases, the participants were provided with regular input on Leading Beyond Authority and Cultural Intelligence. Whilst some candidates used these materials to the fullest advantage, we continued to learn how to entice the more reluctant into this mode of learning.

In addition to the asynchronous content, a monthly real-time engagement took place during the extended Phase 1 of the 2020 programme. These engagements offered extraordinary insights from African leaders, while providing a platform for participants to discuss their ongoing experience of applying their leadership learnings to tackle their current workplace challenges.

Inspirational African leaders who engaged with the 2020 cohort:

- Dr. Ing. Kenneth Adem Ashigbey – CEO, Ghana Telecommunications Chamber
- Naina Desai – Head of Revenue Growth Management & Advanced Analytics, Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages, USA
- Vanessa Naicker, Head of Early Talent, Anglo American, South Africa
- Andrew Nevin, Chief Economist, PwC West Africa
- Lizzie Mukwasa, Group Executive HR, IDC Zambia
- Isis Nyongo, media and technology entrepreneur, Kenya
- Dr Audrey Verhaeghe, Chair: SA Innovation Summit
2021 Highlights

What happened in Phase 2

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the face-to-face modules were replaced with digital, real-time intensive modules run over four and three days respectively. In Phase 2, the shared African challenge was explored, while in Phase 4 we focused on individuals’ workplace challenges and inter-institutional collaboration. Participants have the option of attending a later in-person alumni module when conditions allow.

The first intensive module was delivered from 12–15 July 2021. A number of contributors engaged both formally and informally with the participants, sharing a wealth of experience in leadership. This was followed by an intensive period of idea generation and refinement in response to the Challenge.

Contributors included:

- Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President, Nigeria
- Dr Frannie Lautier, Partner & CEO of SouthBridge Investments and former Senior Vice-President: African Development Bank, Tanzania
- Dr Kibachio Joseph Mwangi, Medical Officer and Advisor for Non Communicable Diseases and Mental Health, WHO, South Africa
- Judy Kihuni Gichuki, Senior Manager, Corporate Strategy, Safaricom Plc, Kenya
- Marlon Burgess, Commercial Manager, Fresenius Medical, South Africa
- Tontela Siwale, Director Health Insurance Services, NHIMA, Zambia
- Dr Robert Sidhe, Founder & Executive Director, Hawi Foundation, Kenya
- Dr Liz Gitau, former Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Medical Association, Kenya
- Judith Okonkwo, Founder, IMISI 3D, Nigeria
- Gladys Bogoshi, Chief Executive Officer, Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital, South Africa
- Dr Atiya Mosam, Public Health Medicine Specialist & Senior Researcher, Priceless SA and Registrar, School of Public Health, Wits University, South Africa
- Abeiku Asare, President & CEO, Asare-AB Company Limited, Ghana
What happened in Phase 4

The second real-time intensive module was delivered virtually from 7–9 September. The module focused on applied leadership learning, starting with feedback from the candidates on their progress in applying the principles of Leading Beyond Authority and Cultural Intelligence to their own leadership challenges. The participants were then taken through the Collaborative Laboratory (Collab) process. The Collab is a partnership simulation whose purpose is to explore the processes through which partnerships are struck / collaborations created; helping participants think differently and bring new approaches to collaborations between sometimes seemingly unlikely partners; and reflecting on how they operate outside of their area of specialization and authority.

Contributors included:

- James Campbell, Managing Director, Botswana Diamonds PLC, South Africa
- Jane Maduegbuna, Founder & Director, Afrinolly Creative Hub, Nigeria
- Angie Murimirwa, CEO, CAMFED, Zimbabwe
- Walter Mong’are, Director, Youth & Development, Office of the President, Kenya
- Shenouda Bissada, Country Manager, Alfanar, Egypt
- Sasha Planting, Associate Business Editor, Daily Maverick, South Africa
Africa Venture Supporters

1. Think Tank

A think tank of eminent African leaders steers the programme, and helps to set the annual challenge.

Our 2021 Think Tank were:

- D Frannie Leautier, Partner & CEO of SouthBridge Investments and former Senior Vice President, African Development Bank (Tanzania)
- Joyce Banda, Founder and Leader of the People’s Party and former President (Malawi)
- Juliet Ehimuan, Director, Google West Africa (Nigeria)
- Marguerite Barankitse, Humanitarian (Burundi)
- Dr Reuel Khosa, Chairman: Public Investment Corporation, Dzana Investments (Pty) Ltd and AKA Capital (Pty) Ltd (South Africa)
- Sir Sam Jonah, Executive Chairman of Jonah Capital and Director of Vodaphone (Ghana)

2. Selection Panel

Applications are reviewed by a pan-African Selection Panel of senior leaders. The applications are reviewed on the basis of two different types of criteria: the individual applicant’s merit, and the contribution of the applicant to the diversity of the group.

Our 2021 selection panel were:

- Barbara Kokonya, Managing Director, Very Chic Limited, Kenya
- Elias Mpondela, President, Zambian Amateur Athletics Association, Zambia
- Kenneth Ashigbey, Chief Executive Officer, Chamber of Telecommunications, Ghana
- Mabel Mungomba, Chief Executive, Belcomm Limited, Zambia
- Rosemary Iphie Ugonabo, Senior Consultant, Nextier Advisory, Nigeria
- Shenouda Bissada, Country Director, Alfanar, Egypt
- Vanessa Naicker, Head of Early Talent, Anglo American, South Africa

3. Consortium members:

Large organizations have the option of sending a minimum of five candidates and becoming a Consortium Member of the Africa Venture. The Consortium Members enjoy a range of additional benefits: brand exposure, and various collaborations to maximize the value for the organization.

Our 2020 & 2021 Consortium Member was:

- Africa Finance Corporation

Prior Consortium Members have included:

- Accenture
- Discovery Limited
- Liberty
- Nestoil
- Rand Merchant Bank
Assessment Results

We measure our impact through an online assessment system that looks at participants’ leadership competencies in three areas: becoming more inclusive, enabling them to lead innovative and resilient teams; broadening their horizons, which helps them to make better decisions, and becoming more collaborative, enabling them to accelerate complex change. The impact assessment results for the 2021 Africa Venture participants are listed below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>More inclusive</th>
<th>Lead innovative resilient teams</th>
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<td>100% are better prepared to lead or operate within a diverse team.</td>
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<th>Broader horizons</th>
<th>Make better decisions</th>
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<td>96% are better prepared to create conditions required for innovation.</td>
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<td>96% are better prepared to adjust their behaviour in culturally diverse situations.</td>
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<td>96% are better prepared to build stronger working relationships.</td>
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<td>85% are better prepared to work through blind spots and minimise their effects.</td>
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<th>More collaborative</th>
<th>Accelerate complex change</th>
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<td>96% are better prepared to thrive in complexity</td>
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<td>93% are better prepared to influence beyond their circle of authority.</td>
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<td>96% are better prepared to have a greater impact in their organization and / or wider community</td>
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They worked together to address this challenge using the Common Purpose Hunan Centred Design process, which ensures they hear new voices, consider the unlikely, and learn how to draw out new ideas from the diversity within a team.

They then presented their ideas to:

- Dr Atiya Mosam, Public Health Medicine Specialist & Senior Researcher, Priceless SA, (South Africa)
- Abeiku Asare, President & CEO, Asare-AB Company Limited (Ghana)
- Dr Tinoula Akinbolagbe, Chief Executive Officer, Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria (Nigeria)

“A big take way for me after the programme is the value of great questions and feedback. Feedback can help you identify or hold a mirror up to your possible blind spots. This is so important for your self-awareness, your own personal growth, and your growth as an effective leader.” - Lynett Daniels, Co-founder & Director, El Roi Rescue Mission NPC, South Africa
Ideas generated by the participants

1. Integrated AI Platform

**Problem Statement:** How to improve lifestyles, identify and diagnose illnesses, whilst creating deeper access to existing tools, services and treatments available for proper personalised/customised care.

**Proposed Solution:** A user friendly integrated AI platform, modelled on telemedicine technology, that interconnects various existing apps, services, technology and big data, to streamline the user experience and access to information, for self diagnosis, illness and lifestyle management, expert advice, equipment, data, medicine and cost management.

**Proposed Design:** The envisaged platform will be modelled with an interactive AI character that allows for customization. The platform will aid in diagnosis by helping users to identify and target symptoms and then generate a course of actions as well as provide suggested apps and public services for support.

2. Mobile clinics for rural areas

**Problem Statement:** To increase accessibility to effective and efficient healthcare treatment, medicine and information.

**Proposed Solution:** Mobile clinics that can move from one place to another as the need arises. The clinics will be able to move by air (helicopter/plane), sea (boat), land (trucks) and rail (train).

**Proposed Design:** The clinics will be mobile, well equipped and with the amenities to provide AI/VR doctors. They will contain an information centre, provide access to telemedicine while at the same time manned by personnel. Existing mobile clinics can be enhanced with state of the art technology so they can address the challenges of accessibility and affordability of healthcare services, doctor to patient ratio, and availability of reliable healthcare information.
3. WhatsApp for Healthcare

**Problem Statement:** To address the problem of access to reliable information, healthcare professionals and lack of collaborative efforts to provide urgent health diagnoses.

**Proposed Solution:** WhatsApp is an already existing technology, currently used by 2 billion people worldwide. It will be utilised to connect patients to doctors, collate and provide easy access to patient data, disseminate authentic, regulated and reliable information, reduce costs for individuals and increase efficiencies for healthcare practitioners.

**Proposed Design:** 24/7 chat centres will be set up to provide access to medical care and information. A partnership will be formed with the Ministry of Health and Telcos to facilitate the dissemination of information to individual’s mobile devices. In order to cater for those who may not have access to a mobile device, each community health centre will be provided with a device and staff will in turn disseminate the information to the community.

4. USSD based mobile app for financing/insurance

**Problem Statement:** To address the lack of access to health care services and information to rural and grassroots communities.

**Proposed Solution:** A social based venture based on the fact that every community in Africa at least has a mobile phone. The effective use of this phone can allow health care access, awareness, prevention (BCOs), training and a comprehensive health financing scheme.

**Proposed Design:** The application will be under continuous development with ongoing roll out of versions including improvements, and bringing in components of telemedicine. The continuous use would also develop an AI system that could be used to track sickness history and data. The health financing would be facilitated through a mobile money APN, such as M-Pesa, which would be incorporated in the system to allow the app users to save a certain amount as insurance policy. A royalty-based reward system would be incorporated where clients are given points for using the app, referrals, savings and bonuses which the users can use as credits to access health care services.
5. Teledernece and Artificial Intelligence

**Problem Statement:** Delivering access to affordable quality primary healthcare services using AI-driven Telemedicine solutions...

**Proposed Solution:** Telemedicine that delivers healthcare services and diagnostics using technology driven by Artificial Intelligence. The solution will lead to improved convenience and accessibility as users will be able to access the service from their mobile app or to the nearest booth in their locality which reduces waiting times at the clinics while at the same time gathering vital information for action by healthcare specialists.

**Proposed Design:** The solution will utilize open source and cloud-based technologies to drive down implementation and operational costs. It will integrate Telemedicine as a mobile app and a Kiosk-based app to provide options for those who cannot afford mid-range phones. A Partnership will ensure integration with existing healthcare operators and providers in the private and public sectors. They will provide the needed capacity for managing requests coming from the Telemedicine platform. Local residents with suitable training will be incentivised to provide first-hand assistance for incoming patients as well as drive ownership and sustainability in the long-term.

“A big take way for me after the programme is the value of great questions and feedback. Feedback can help you identify or hold a mirror up to your possible blind spots. This is so important for your self-awareness, your own personal growth and your growth as an effective leader.” - Lauren Jimmy, Fundraising Intern, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

“The Africa Venture programme gave me an opportunity to meet and engage with leaders who have passed many challenges and become successful. I met people whom I would never have met if it wasn’t for the programme.” - Alato Kassahun Adelo, Area Program Coordinator, Ethio-Wetlands and Natural Resources Association, Ethiopia
“I feel better prepared to have a greater impact in my organization and/or wider community – by being self-aware of who I am and whose I am, by being comfortable with the uncomfortable, by starting small and dreaming big, by seeking out opportunities in the small and big, by knowing my purpose and knowing my vision, by being my authentic self!”

– Wanjala Regina, Compensation and Benefits Specialist, DIB Bank, Kenya

“The programme has opened up my understanding of the essence of team work and partnerships. I believe it is easy to excel when you are able to work with others effectively to achieve a particular goal. When the people feel the endearing nature of your leadership, they are ready to assist you comb through all roadblocks. I am picking this from the programme.”

– Stephen Yeboah, Programs Lead, Passionate Africa Leadership Institute, Ghana
“I believe, through this programme, I have managed to unlock a part of my mind that has been lying dormant due to routines and ‘business as usual’ in my daily life. I feel excited about the prospective of influencing beyond my sphere and making impact on the extended community. The activities during this programme have allowed me to think outside the box and challenge how things are done, prompting me to brainstorm how I can make change with the set of skills that I possess.”

– Adele Makayi, Creative Director and Digital Marketing

“Africa Venture has equipped me with better self-awareness and understanding of my core, I have a better understanding of biases due to cultural background, I am more comfortable with taking leadership roles even if I am not fully prepared and may stumble in the early part, and, I am more courageous in engaging people.”

– Samson Vese, Associate Vice President, Africa Finance Corporation, Nigeria
Africa Venture at a glance

6 Years
68% Private Sector
224 participants
20% Non Profit Sector
Representing 21 countries
12% Public Sector

Representing organizations including:

- Accenture
- Africa Improved Foods Rwanda LTD
- African Development Bank
- Africa Finance Corporation
- AISEC
- American University in Cairo
- Africa Reconciled
- Business and Arts South Africa (BASA)
- Camfed
- CAS LLC
- Congo Peace Network
- Children and Women Hope Organization
- Discovery Health
- DIB Bank Kenya Limited
- El Roi Rescue Mission NPC
- Equal Education
- Ethio- Wetlands and Natural Resources Association
- FAIDI GIRL
- First National Bank Zambia
- Hollard Insurance
- Huduma Kenya
- Kenyan Conferencing Solutions
- Kilifi County Government
- Land O’Lakes Venture 37
- Liberty
- Ministry of Public Works
- Ministry of Innovation, ICT and Youth Affairs
- Nestoil Limited
- Pan-Africa ILGA
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers
- Sahara Group
- Slum2School
- Stellenbosch University
- Total Health Trust Limited (Liberty Group)
- Word Vision Ethiopia
- Yello Ray Digital Agency
- Youth First Madagascar
- Zambia Young and Emerging Farmers Association

With contributors from:

- Accenture
- Africa Finance Corporation
- Afrinolly
- Alfanar
- Britam
- Botswana Diamonds PLC
- Dandora Dumpsite Rehabilitation Group
- Dangote Cement
- eLimu
- First Consultant Hospital
- IMISI 3D
- M- Kopa
- MTN
- Nailab
- Nairobi Garage
- Nigerian Stock Exchange
- Ngong Hills Wind Farm
- Nike Art Gallery
- Private Sector Health Alliance of Nigeria
- Safaricom
- Standard Chartered Bank
- SouthBridge Investment
- The Conversation Africa
- WHO
Florentin’s impact story

“The Africa Venture Programme has enabled me to understand how to lead in circumstances where I do not have clear authority.”

My leadership challenge

During the Africa Venture programme, we were tasked to identify a leadership challenge in our workplace or society, which we would use to embed the learnings garnered on the programme. Looking at my community, I realised that 75% of the active population in the DRC are unemployed; 65% of the unemployed people are aged from 18-35 years old (young people). So, the young people are most affected by unemployment in the DRC, meaning they do not have income and resources to meet their needs. In order to survive, many of them are lured into engaging in violent initiatives such as armed groups, kidnapping groups, armed robbers groups, street children or gangs, etc. That is the root cause of the general insecurity observed in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.
My strategy:
I identified the following strategies as possible ways of tackling this challenge:

- Establish youth peace clubs respecting diversity in terms of gender, origin, tribe, religion, experience and political ideology.
- Train youth peace clubs members in active non-violence and entrepreneurship.
- Provide coaching to young people in the identification of business ideas, the selection of the most relevant ideas and the development of mini business plans to materialize business ideas.
- Break down participants into smaller groups to identify business ideas according to the local context.
- Call for the presentation and discussion of business ideas from smaller groups in plenary to select the most innovative and sustainable ideas with the potential of promoting the unity and peaceful coexistence of peace club members.

Action plan
I put the following actions in place:

- Coached young people in drafting mini business plans in order to materialize the selected business ideas;
- Raised funds to support the implementation of community business plans drafted by young people;
- Organize youth Peace Forums every year to promote the collaboration between young people, sharing experience, networking and joint advocacy. Youth forums on peace will enable me to share my vision of peace and development with several young people from the territories and provinces of the DRC. And it will help young people develop a shared vision on peace and development.

Achievements:
To date, the following achievements have been realized and given that the programme is on-going, I anticipate even greater achievements:

- Trained 40 young people (boys and girls) in active non-violence and entrepreneurship in two different territories.
- Coached 40 young people in the identification and selection of business ideas as well as the development of small business plans.
- Established 2 youth peace clubs composed of 20 young people each; each in a different territory.
- The two established peace clubs are still working on their business plans and thereafter I will work with the young people to raise funds for the implementation of their mini business plans.
Leadership learnings

During the training sessions with the youth, I learned that each young person has potential and resources that he can capitalize on for their personal or community development, no matter their origin, tribe, and intellectual level, political or religious beliefs. However, what keeps them in unemployment and poverty is often a lack of inspiration, ignorance of their potential, poor perceptions of the concept of work, lack of courage to start a new business, and the fear of the risk or failure.

The diversity of the members of the youth peace clubs has enabled the young people to generate several different business ideas and select the most interesting in terms of profit margin, social cohesion, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. This was made possible because I understand the concept of Cultural Intelligence and was able to impart the knowledge in the youth in the Peace Clubs.

Young people gathered around a common interest (business) develop active communication, which brings them to forget their small differences and focus on a common vision of business and peace. And I believe, in the future those transformed young people will be able to sensitize their respective communities about the need for changing mind-sets and promoting mutual acceptance, peace and development.

“I feel better prepared to have a greater impact in my organization and wider community. This I will do by transferring my experimental learning from Africa Venture into practice and believing in myself as the best person who can do it. I will also collaborate and network with other organizations to strengthen the capacity of my organization and the wider community.” - Mourine Ndege, Director, FAIDI GIRL, Kenya