

# A Resilient Africa 2020

An annual report of AfriLabs impact



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# What AfriLabs is about

AfriLabs is a network organisation of over 200 innovation hubs in Africa. We support these hubs by building the capacity of their managers and staff, promoting local and regional collaboration and providing access to funding for their projects and startups. These hubs in turn support startups across the continent who build relevant and scalable solutions, thereby improving the lives of everyone and the economy in Africa.

## Mission

To support innovation hubs and their communities to raise high potential entrepreneurs that will stimulate economic growth and social development in Africa. We achieve this through capacity building, financing, networking, policy advocacy, and providing insightful, reliable data.

## Vision

A thriving innovation economy in Africa, driven by the power of our community.



# What a Year!

Foreword by Anna Ekeledo, Executive Director, AfriLabs

This year 2020 brought with it a plethora of emotions, experiences, and social, economic, political, and health events mainly influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of us suffered loss and to those I say, in solidarity, our hearts continue to be with you and your families as you navigate into the year.

In spite of all of this, we are incredibly proud of the efforts of our community members, especially innovation hubs across the continent. At AfriLabs, we have seen resilience in the face of unprecedented disruption. Every day this year, we have worked with our community members who have stepped up to the challenge to support businesses across Africa navigate the negative effects of the pandemic; and build innovative solutions leveraging digital technologies to support governments, organizations, and society to increase access to healthcare, products, and services needed.

Most importantly, we have seen first hand the power and impact of collaboration among all stakeholders of the ecosystem. Throughout this report, you'll see this evident in projects like Rollo Africa executed by our hub members in Egypt, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Cameroon in partnership with the African Union and UNDP, and our cross-regional projects between hubs across Africa supporting women entrepreneurs and driving new models of virtual incubation and investor matching supported by



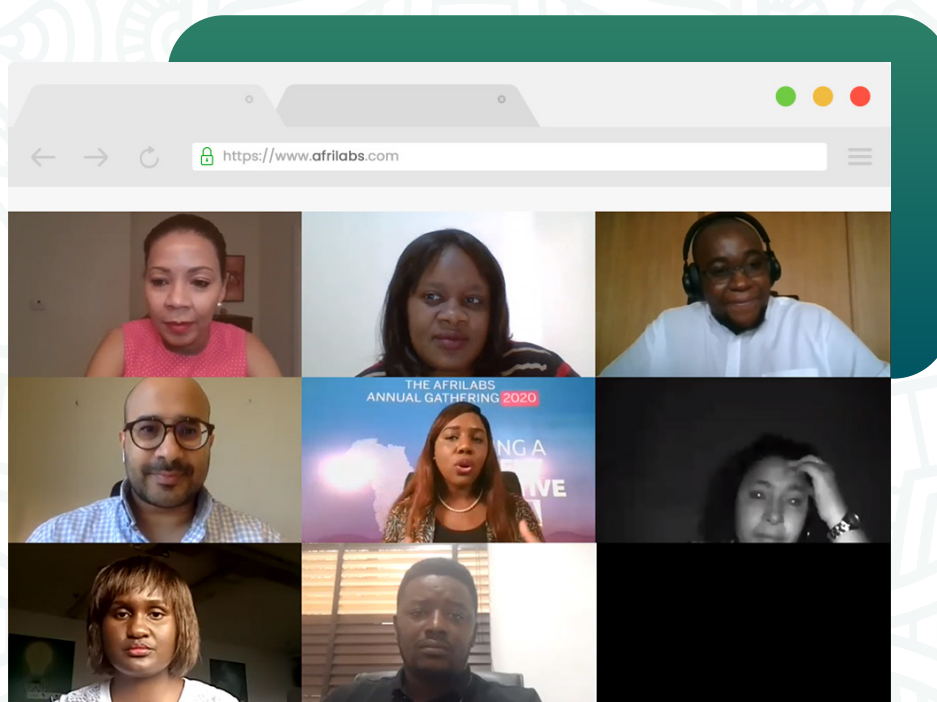
Agence française de développement (AFD). We have also had an interesting series of research activities and dialogues that have revealed interesting insights with partners such as Djembe Insights, KTN Global Alliance, and Mozilla Foundation as well through our activities at the EdTech Hub and CovidAction focused on supporting innovations that support out of school children and other citizens deal with the effects of the pandemic.

This year our network grew and we added more countries into our network Guinea Bissau, Cabo Verde and Equatorial Guinea and we took our most exciting event every year, our AfriLabs Annual Gathering virtual. It was a memorable experience indeed!!

Overall, we saw the power of our community shine through. We now believe more than ever that if we work together, we can overcome anything. We can build, grow, and achieve our vision of an Innovation economy in Africa, driven by the power of our community. We are a resilient people and this report showcases our stories, through the voices of our team, our members, partners, and everyone who has worked with us or been impacted by us this year. If you have been part of our story, we would like to say a big thank you! If you haven't...well, let's make it happen in the new year 2021. We are always excited to grow our family!

# The AfriLabs Community in a pandemic

One of the goals for AfriLabs is to empower members of our network while providing a platform for collaboration. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic this year, we have continued to support our community via several capacity building initiatives like virtual workshops, webinars, networking opportunities, and project funding.



*Conversation with the AfriLabs Board at the 2020 AfriLabs Annual Gathering*

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*Avec AfriLabs, nous avons la possibilité de parler à des hubs à travers l'Afrique. AfriLabs nous donne le mérite de parler à des partenaires. Mes collègues apprennent et moi en apprenons beaucoup sur le pôle d'innovation et sur la meilleure façon de gérer un pôle.*

Abdelsalam Safi,  
Founder and CEO,  
Wenak Lab



“

*This year has been an amazing year despite the Global pandemic as we saw increased participation by our members in exploring all the opportunities provided to produce greater solutions to combat the notable challenges experienced during the course of the year. As a network, collaboration is a key factor we emphasize on, and having to see members collaborate towards ecosystem expansion and development through several projects and programmes has been satisfying. We look forward to developing the African ecosystem as a unified force for economic change.*

Kenechukwu C. Chukwu,  
Member Services Coordinator,  
AfriLabs



“

*My experience thus far has been fulfilling and brings a sense of belonging and aligned purpose. The work AfriLabs has been doing across Africa is very instrumental in creating a clearly defined ecosystem framework and setting a standard and best practices that country initiative can emulate. Through AfriLabs I have been able to collaborate and network with several organizations across the continent and I am very confident that the collaboration will grow as we evolve and grow ourselves. AfriLabs has empowered me and my organization not only through the various grant opportunities but also by creating a platform where I can share my skills and market my organization's activities. I strongly believe AfriLabs is well placed and structured enough to bring all African tech and innovation startups together and to facilitate better policy development and implementation. I am a proud AfriLabber!*

Mara Zhanet Michelo,  
Founder and CEO,  
Jacaranda Hub,  
Zambia



“

*Douar Tech was one of the first Moroccan hubs to join the AfriLabs Alliance. We're grateful to bring a North African contribution to this collective effort, to bring together the creative and entrepreneurial communities of the continent. Besides getting connected to peers from other hubs of the continent and bringing along projects to work on together, we are happy to participate in various programs the Alliance is setting up for the purpose of sharing knowledge and opportunities.*

Hanae BEZAD,  
Founder, Douar Tech,  
Morocco



## How we grew this year

AfriLabs has grown in terms of our capacity and reach to enable us to expand to a wider community for more collaboration, networking, and development of the African tech ecosystem.

In 2020, we expanded every quadrimester

### 3rd quadrimester

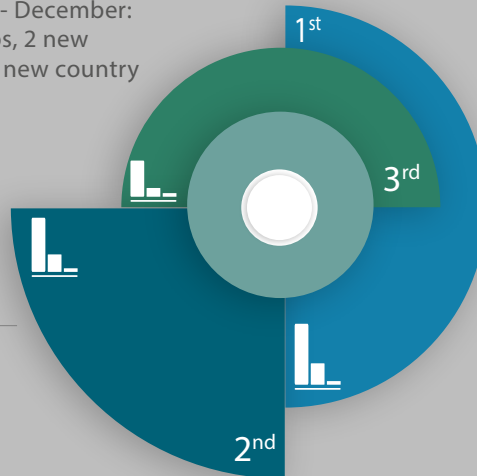
September - December:  
15 new hubs, 2 new cities and 1 new country

### 1st quadrimester

January - April:  
28 new hubs, 8 new cities and 1 new country

### 2nd quadrimester

May-August:  
27 new hubs, 6 new cities and 1 new country

**70**

Total number of new hubs admitted in 2020

**3**

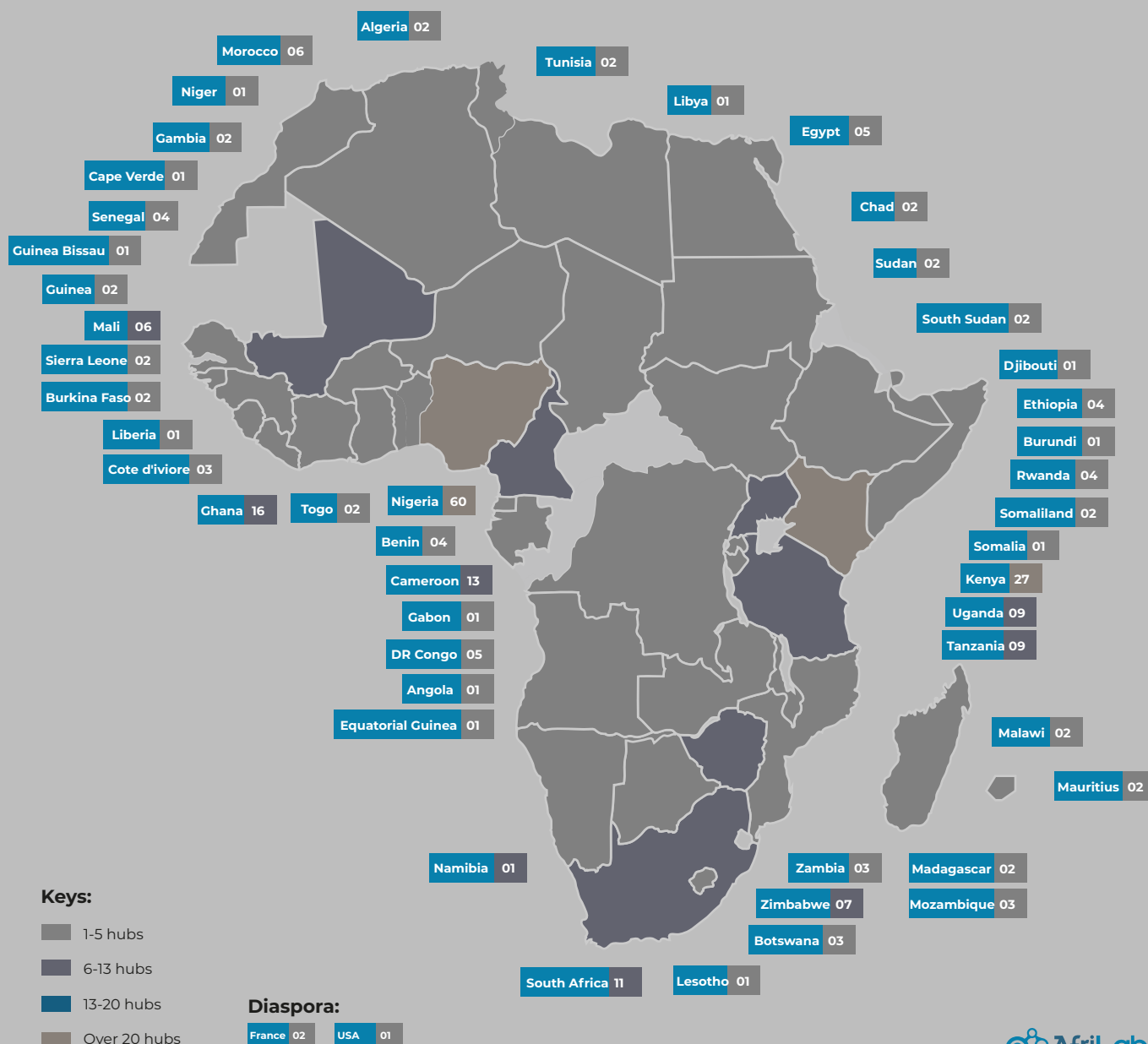
Total number of new countries in 2020

**14**

Total number of new cities in 2020

Our current number of members is 240 hubs with 256 centres in 107 cities and 48 countries across Africa

## AFRILABS 240 MEMBER HUBS IN 48 AFRICAN COUNTRIES



The Largest Pan-African Network of Technology/Innovation Hubs in Africa

“

*We are very excited to be part of the AfriLabs network. We believe this partnership will create the necessary synergies to build the next generation of Dreamers.*

Oscar A. NCHASO,  
Managing Director,  
Dreams Hub.



“

*Our vision is a thriving innovation economy in Africa, driven by the power of our community, and we are happy that more hubs with the same purpose are joining us.*

*The pandemic has affected businesses across the continent in a way nothing has done before, and collaboration through communities like ours is a right step in the right direction.*

Anna Ekeledo,  
Executive Director, AfriLabs.



“

*Joining AfriLabs, it is my expectation to be connected to the African network entrepreneurship and furthermore, maximize opportunities and establish partnerships.*

Etelvino José Armando,  
Executive Director of IDC - Iniciativa  
para Democracia e Cidadania,  
Maputo/ Mozambique.



“

*This is an exciting time for AfriLabs. The constant growth of our network speaks to the importance of community for the technology and innovation ecosystems across Africa. We are particularly thrilled to welcome Equatorial Guinea which was previously not represented within our membership. Our Catalyst program, which increases the pool of capital available to promising African growth-stage entrepreneurs and our capacity building program, both of which were launched late last year, will ensure that we continue to offer value to our over 200 member hubs.*

Nekesa Were,  
Director of Strategy, AfriLabs.



“

*As TheNeoHub, we are excited to be part of the largest pan-African network of technology and innovation centres, AfriLabs. Being a member of this prestigious network will bring our hub closer to an integrated and prosperous future in innovation and technology fostered by open collaboration and growth in entrepreneurship. This opportunity will expand our network and co-creation across the continent.*

Zindzi Letsididi,  
CEO, TheNeoHub.



## Engaging our community

To design effective programmes that support our community, we frequently connect with them to understand their realities and get feedback so that we can plan the right interventions for them.

## Listening Tour

### Listening Tour

The AfriLabs Listening Tour is a unique session organized to enable the Secretariat team to gain insights from members and also learn more about their experiences and expectations from the network.

The Listening Tour was held from the 17th of August to the 28th of August 2020. With a total of 16 sessions, we had a turn-up of 72 members during the listening tour. Here is what our community told us about their current experience in a pandemic year.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their community, they noted the following:

- Shortage of funds amongst member communities.
- Reduction in administrative cost which led to the layoff of staff.
- A Halt in physical activities due to the lockdown in various countries.
- The decline in partnership and sponsorship of programs.

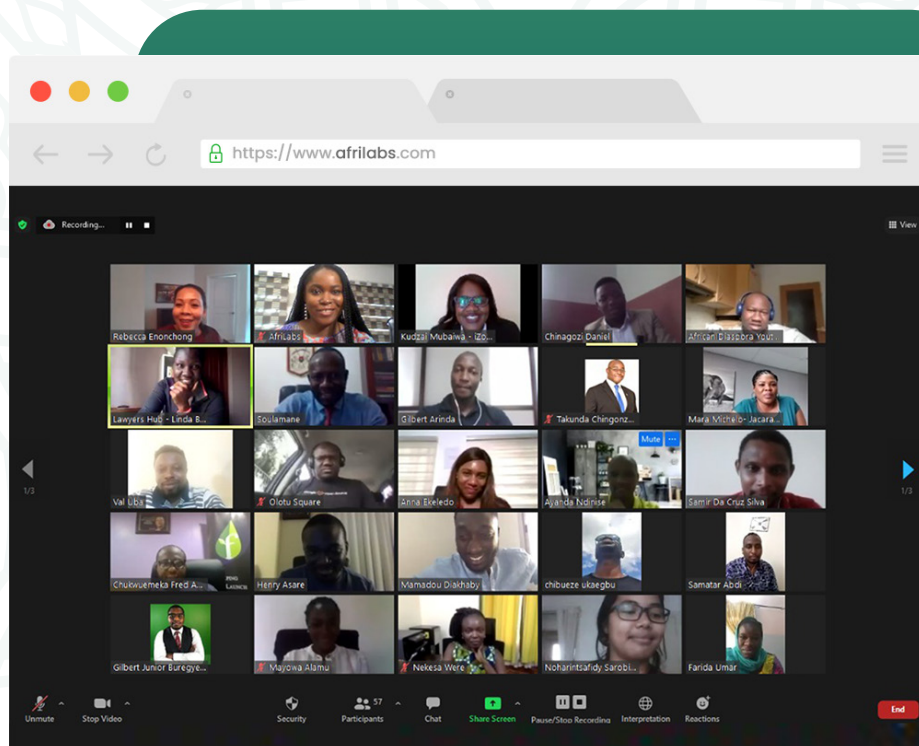
They put the following measures in place to overcome these challenges:

- The digital transitioning of programs such as incubation & acceleration training, hackathons, and mentoring amongst others.
- Development of platforms such as Hagiga Wahid, Blue Messenger, and Rumour Verification Management System to help spread adequate awareness as regards the pandemic.
- Embarked on COVID-19 production of PPEs and relief materials to communities.
- Renovation, relocation, and restructuring of workspace/coworking space.

# AfriLabs Annual Gathering Meeting

Unlike the previous General Meetings, the 2020 AGM was held virtually via zoom on the 7th of October due to movement restrictions and health challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding, several discussions were held during the AGM which included;

- The election of a new member of the AfriLabs Board (Takunda Chingonzo)
- Approval of the Minutes of the 2019 General Assembly
- Assessment of AfriLabs' achievements over the past year 2020 and the prospects for the future by the Board
- Update on the AfriLabs 2020 Annual Gathering



## Hubs Achievements

Our member hubs across Africa showed resilience despite the pandemic. They made adaptations to their engagement methods and grew regardless of the impact of COVID-19. Here are some major announcements from our community that shone bright in a seemingly dark year.

- Deario Mozambique - Modeling a framework out of past learning resources and offering accelerator services to banks as an agro-business. 
- RLabs South Africa - Expansion of RLabs women program beyond South Africa. 
- Mzuzu E-Hub Malawi - Fundraising through Public-Private Partnership Commission and World Bank (2years grant). 
- BongoHive Zambia - Learning webinars for startup communities in Zambia. 
- HiveColab Uganda - Embarked on Covid-19 relief projects to help the communities. 
- Ventures Platform Nigeria - Organized the COVID-19 Innovation Challenge 
- Jokkolabs Gambia - A monthly pre-incubation program for startups (virtual) on digital marketing, project management, mobilizing resources, and coding for business. Online learning activities. Setup ICT taskforce of covid-19 to support ICTs, government, and frontline workers. 
- Buni Hub Tanzania - Virtual training and hackathons. 
- Jacaranda Hub Zambia - Created a one-quarter fund to support early-stage viable startups. 
- Impact Lab Morocco - Provide a new digital program for entrepreneurs across Africa. 
- Ennovate Hub Tanzania - Expanded to a new city and launched a venture fund 
- The District Egypt - Implementors of the Rollo Africa project. 

# How we responded to COVID-19

*From 'virtually everything' to mobilizing resources with our partners for the ecosystem*

Most of Africa started shutting down in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the entire continent, including the innovation ecosystem, felt the economic and psychological fallouts that followed. Many jobs were lost as many businesses struggled to stay afloat. This gave rise to a few premeditated and mostly reactionary responses by governments, corporate organisations and international bodies to cushion the effect of the lockdowns.

## Covidtech.Africa

*Mapping of the African Ecosystem response to the COVID-19 pandemic*

At AfriLabs, we immediately moved all our planned programmes and activities online. This included our ongoing Capacity Building Programme and Annual Gathering. Next, we started mapping our innovation responses and interventions to the COVID-19 pandemic, building a database that allowed the entire ecosystem add and/or access COVID-19 information, opportunities and innovation across the continent. We called this platform covidtech.africa.

“

*The entire Africa and even the world has not in over 100 years had to pause everything for months. These are unprecedented times caused by the impact of the pandemic and we have to support each other with resources and information, especially entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs across the continent; that's why we built covidtech.africa.*

Joshua Omena .A.  
Communications Lead,  
AfriLabs



## Dialogue Series

*Having candid conversations on how to navigate the new reality brought about by the pandemic.*

We organised two panel sessions in French and English where seasoned hub managers shared insights on the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and how hubs can reinvent the wheel so that they not only survive these challenges but also come out sustainable and more goal-driven.

“

*This was such an insightful event for our Hubs and members of our community. It was such an important time for our Ecosystem to rally around each other as the world as we knew it was facing unprecedented challenges with the COVID- 19 pandemic. Our Hubs left this event encouraged and with better ideas on how to keep thriving throughout the pandemic. The learning experience from this event was immense as it was raw practical advice from Hubs leaders within all the African Regions discussing situations peculiar to their regions and unique problem areas.*

Jennifer Okeke-Ojiudu,  
Event Coordinator, AfriLabs.



“

*The impact of this session has been positive for our hub. At the end of this webinar, we were able to learn about new work approaches and income models that allowed us to continue our activities despite the difficulties linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. It allowed us to adjust our business model and more precisely to innovate in terms of the value proposition and the acquisition & conversion channels.*

Ibrahima Kalil Kaba,  
Managing partner, Trustees.



“

*We need to unlearn what we have learnt as Hubs are treading in uncharted territories and we must not recycle old solutions. Now is the time to immerse what the new reality is, we must focus on what adds value.*

Khalid Mohamed Ali,  
Co-Founder/ChairPerson,  
ImpactHub Khartoum Sudan



“

*Ça été plaisir de modérer la 1ère édition de l'AfriLabs Dialogue Serie, en Français. Permettre à la communauté francophone d'AfriLabs de partager leur expertise tout en démontrant leur résilience, malgré les défis et le COVID-19, a été un signal fort de motivation et d'optimisme pour nos écosystèmes Téch en Afrique.*

Elodie NONGA,  
Founder of WETECH  
(Women in Entrepreneurship  
and Technology)



“

*The pandemic has created an avenue for hubs to play a mediating role between the Government and the community as opposed to just getting support. Hubs now have the opportunity to bridge the gap between innovators and the Government.*

Kola Aina,  
Founding Partner,  
Ventures Platform Nigeria.



226

226 attendees from across  
Africa participated in the  
English session

66

66 attendees from across  
Africa participated in the  
French session

## COVIDaction

### *Building a technology and innovation pipeline for the COVID-19 pandemic*

COVIDaction is a partnership led by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)'s Frontier Technology Hub along with other collaborators including AfriLabs to build a technology and innovation pipeline to support activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, the consortium scans the globe for promising ideas, evaluates and makes sense of what is found, then supports the best ideas with grant funding and venture support, and share what is learned along the way. COVIDaction identified four key thematic areas to work across that have emerged through consultation with investors, entrepreneurs, and networks across Africa and South Asia. They are:

- Local Production & Local Solutions (LPLS): crowdsourcing and mapping innovative responses to dealing with the demand for unavailable goods and personal protective equipment.
- Data: sources, collection tools, and analysis to inform the response and pandemic decision-making.
- Resilient Health Systems (RHS): technologies that extend the reach, coordination, and/or continuity of medical support between hospitals, clinics, communities, and households.

We at AfriLabs played major roles in the Local Production Local Solution thematic area. We leveraged our community members as local scouts for informal COVID-19 innovation productions in different African countries and also helped in the judging process of the applications.

Learn more about COVIDaction at <https://medium.com/covidaction/>

## Data



12 investments across 4 areas: responsible data, epi models, data analytics platforms, and sources and collection tools



Co-funding and investments from USAID's DATA.FI programme



Strategic partnership with GPSDD allowed us to introduce data grantees to National Statistics Offices (Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, etc. ) and Africa CDC

## Local Production and Local Solutions

7 Investments to date across the circular supply chain, cross-scale and cross-sector

Building a visual map of production with the submissions received and other sources to enable more distributed

AfriLabs scouting offline makerspaces, informal groups and local communities normally not reached with digital open calls

## Resilient Health Systems



Tried and tested solutions, and in most cases, with evidence of scale



Boots on the ground: 5 locally owned organisations/partnerships and 4 partnerships between the global north and global south organisations



Women-led: 8 organisations/partnerships with women in leadership positions on the proposed implementation team

“

*AfriLabs is a COVIDaction strategic partner and an integral part of the team. AfriLabs was chosen as a partner on this program as a result of the organisation's wide network, support structures and impressive track record in the development of innovation in Africa.*

*Involvement in this program allows AfriLabs to support the development of the technology and innovation ecosystems during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Alex Losneanu,  
Innovation Lead, Brink.



“

*The AfriLabs Team has a wealth of experience and knowledge in open innovation and informal community development. We are extremely fortunate to be able to collaborate with them on the COVIDaction Program.*

Ramon Michael,  
Innovation Consultant, Brink.

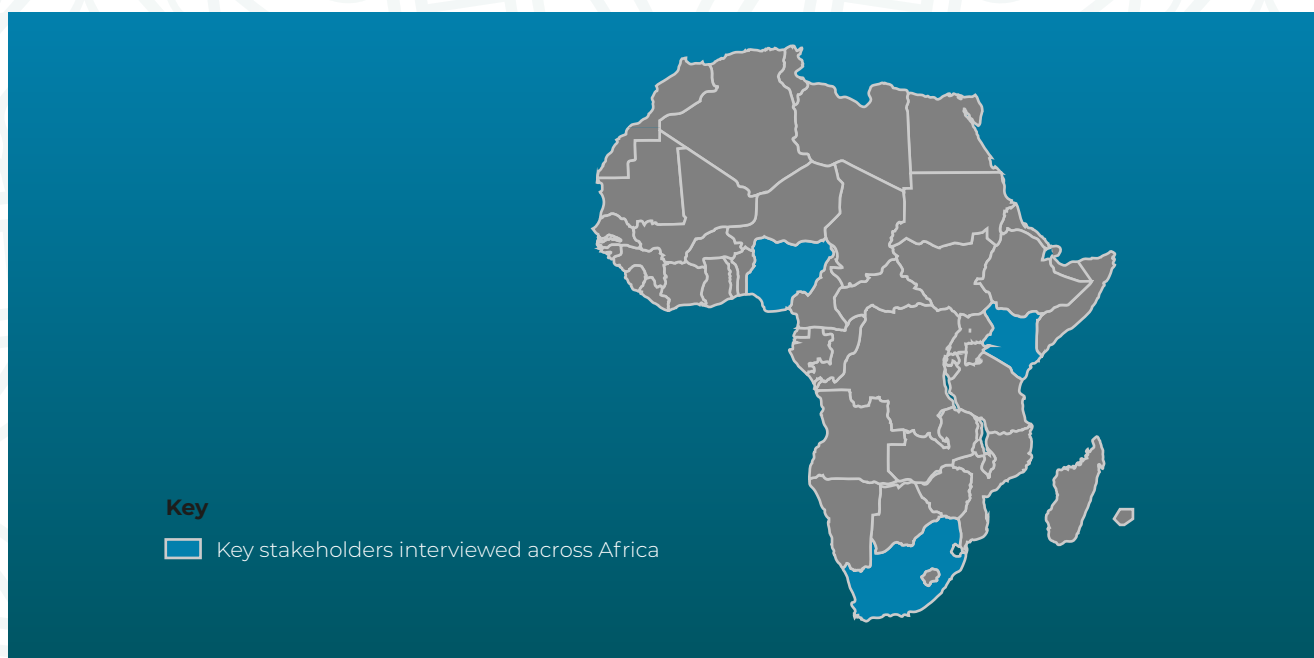


# Rapid Analysis of Innovation Response to COVID-19 Pandemic (Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa) Impact Report

## *Understanding the impact of COVID-19 for future interventions*

AfriLabs in partnership with the KTN Global Alliance Africa worked on a rapid analysis of challenges, impact and innovation response to COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, with a focus on Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

The analysis aimed to inform intending support from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) - formerly DFID and the KTN Global Alliance Africa to innovation systems in Africa to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to provide lessons and best practices to strengthen the innovation response to future crises.



Access the reports at [www.afrilabs.com/news](http://www.afrilabs.com/news)



*The Rapid Analysis of Innovation Response to COVID-19 Pandemic (Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa) came in handy to provide insight and a better understanding of Africa's innovation response to the pandemic. This insight is key in informing the right support necessary for fueling innovation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as inform the relevant support needed for the ecosystem to build resilience against future crises. AfriLabs is happy that the findings and recommendations from the Analysis had guided the initial design and development of the GAA's activities for the year 2021 to support the African innovation ecosystem.*

Patrick Ashu,  
Programmes Officer, AfriLabs.



*When KTN's Global Alliance Africa (GAA) pivoted its activities to meet the challenges of the upcoming pandemic, they contracted AfriLabs to provide a rapid analysis of the innovation ecosystem responses to Covid-19 in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. In addition to the report, blogs, and slide handouts being interesting and insightful outputs in their own right, key recommendations made in the report were heavily utilised in the initial design and development of the GAA's core activities for the next year (2021). With GAA's objective to support capacity building and resiliency in African innovation ecosystems, AfriLabs has been a key collaborator and valued source of knowledge and expertise. Overall, KTN had a very positive experience working with AfriLabs and look forward to continued collaboration going forward.*

Andrea Wyers,  
Knowledge Transfer Manager -  
Global Alliance Africa.



99 stakeholders of the African innovation ecosystem engaged during a one-month quantitative data collection which was conducted online and was targeted at multiple sources including AfriLabs, Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) South Africa, partners, organizations, governments, entrepreneurs, innovation hubs and their communities innovators across Africa.



Insightful Report as well as Blog Posts and Handouts produced for individual focus countries (Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa).



Twenty-four (24) V with focus on Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria.

# AfriLabs Team based in Abuja

Other team members in Nairobi,  
Accra and Cape Town



## Rollo Africa

*Supporting small businesses in Africa through the pandemic while equipping the ecosystem with knowledge for the future*

African Entrepreneurship Ecosystem and African Small and Micro businesses have grown fast in the last decade in many industries. However, the support system models for small businesses have been always inspired and developed from outside the continent like coworking spaces, incubators, hackathons, and accelerators which normally address and fit only formal businesses that have a different level of maturity, different macro and micro-economics and different market outlooks and different investments needs. African informal businesses need a new model that respects the local context, level of maturity, background and local education, growth of a business, and response to local risk and crises. This was clear when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Small African Businesses.

Supported by AfriLabs, UNDP and the African Union, Rollo is a business simulation program dedicated to inspiring and supporting small African enterprises facing challenges after the COVID-19 outbreak. It is composed of three intensive simulation days in which enterprises learn to manage and operate in a competitive environment within different market outlooks.

In conjunction with selected AfriLabs member hubs (JokkoLabs, ActivSpaces, Kmt House, Savannah and izeone hub), we started with bootcamps in 5 different African Countries namely: Cameroon, Egypt, Senegal, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Each bootcamp is composed of 20 participants divided into 5 teams. Each team is made up of 4 entrepreneurs who work together for 3 intensive days and share best practices and knowledge in a specific industry like retail, service, hospitality, manufacturing..etc. Participants will take virtual business decisions in Strategy, Marketing, Pricing, Sales, Operations and analyze their market shares, profitabilities and revenues based on their decisions, market outlooks and their competitor's behaviours.

As at the time of writing this report, these boot camps are still ongoing in various countries.

Learn more about Rollo Africa at [www.rolloafrica.com](http://www.rolloafrica.com)



## Zayed Sustainability Prize

We partnered with Djembe Consultants, the media agency promoting the Zayed Sustainability Prize in Africa to give the 2020 edition more visibility and to encourage our community to apply. We organised a webinar and Nekesa Were spoke about the role of innovation hubs in developing Africa and a previous winner of the Zayed Sustainability Prize spoke on how to successfully apply for the prestigious prize.



Over 10,000 members of the African Tech Ecosystem got to know about the 2020 edition of the ZSP



Over 25% of them interacted with the communication materials and took action



Over 1,000 link clicks to either the webinar registration page or the ZSP website



We had over 110 attendees at the ZSP webinar, organised by AfriLabs and Djembe



As a result of this partnership, the ZSP recorded over 700 700 completed applications from Africa.

## The EdTech Hub

### *Powering education with technology*

EdTech Hub is a global research partnership between The University of Cambridge, Overseas Development Institute, Results for Development, Brink, Jigsaw, Open Development and Education, INJINI, e-Learning Africa, AfriLabs and BRAC. The goal of the hub is to empower people making decisions about technology in education.

In April 2020, AfriLabs led an EdTech Hub global call for ideas to respond to the learning emergency caused by Covid-19 school closures. We reviewed 371 applications, hosted 5 pitch days, selected innovations to feature in our virtual sandboxes and learned a lot in the process.

Using innovation sandboxes, we try to make sense of the enabling environment; the whole system in which a certain EdTech intervention exists. This includes the interventions design, manufacturing, route-to-market, distribution, financing, user adoption and more.

In Uganda, EdTech Hub is working with Mango Tree Literacy Lab, one of the sandboxes in our portfolio, and in partnership with District Local Governments, primary schools, parents and communities, to implement Interactive Radio Instruction in response to COVID-19 challenges. We tested the effectiveness of adding human infrastructures and supplementary learning materials to radio as a medium of instruction. We did this by providing hour-long learning instructions to listening centres (that accommodates 10 kids each) over the radio for 2 sprints of six weeks each, and we had older siblings, teachers and parents act as facilitators of the radio sessions.



Number of participants:

**Over 1000 people**



Funds Disbursed:

**300,000 GBP**

(50,000 GBP for each of the six sandboxes in our portfolio)

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*Testing ideas in a sandbox helped improve my understanding of edtech challenges and I enjoy knowing that what I do, in some way, is improving access to education for marginalized people.*

Taiye Salami,  
Sandbox Co-lead and Programme  
Associate, AfriLabs



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*The sandbox experience has given us a safe space to experiment with our ideas about improving radio education pedagogy in a rural African environment.*

Craig Esbeck,  
Director Mango Tree Learning Lab



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*The sandbox process has been both challenging and exciting, helping us engage in a weekly cycle of evidence gathering, reflection, and improvement. Working with other experts through the Hub has introduced us to a new global community of innovators that we're proud to be part of.*

Victoria Brown,  
Education, M&E, Development  
Consultant



Learn more about The EdTech Hub at [www.edtechhub.org](http://www.edtechhub.org)

## Djembe Insight Report

AfriLabs, the largest pan-African network of technology and innovation centres in partnership with Djembe Consultants, the award-winning Africa-focused communications consultancy, launched an Insights Report during the 2020 AfriLabs Annual Gathering. The report assesses the impact of COVID-19 on the continent's young innovators and entrepreneurs and provides perspectives from industry experts as to how African decisionmakers from both the public and private sectors can accelerate support across the full innovation spectrum including education, inclusivity, investment, policy and research and development.

Access the report at [bit.ly/AfriLabsDjembeInsightReport](https://bit.ly/AfriLabsDjembeInsightReport)

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*The continent's survival DNA, always durable to internal and external shocks of all shapes and forms, proves a resilience in its youthful demographic, one that is constantly creating, innovating, and looking ahead.*

Anna Ekeledo,  
Executive Director, AfriLabs



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*The Insights Report reaffirms our strongly held belief that the African innovation ecosystem is singularly the most important enabler of widespread socio-economic development. Despite the innate resilience African innovators and SMEs have shown during this challenging year, this ecosystem urgently needs further intervention of policymakers and industry supporters to create a more conducive environment for innovators and SMEs to survive and thrive. While the uncertainties of COVID-19 continue to threaten economic stability and growth, future economic prosperity can be greatly enhanced by nurturing the African innovation spirit to prepare the continent for incredible success, just when it needs it most.*

Mitchell Prather,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Djembe Consultants



“

*Partnering with AfriLabs on the Djembe Insights report was an incredibly impactful collaboration. The team's passion and expertise for innovation in Africa was an integral part of our campaigns and we look forward to more shared success soon.*

James Deacon,  
Account Director,  
Djembe Consultants



## Key highlights from the report

### Scaling Homegrown Innovations Beyond Borders

90%

Majority of the entrepreneurs (90%) are likely to need to or be able to scale their business in the wake of COVID-19

23%

The highest number of respondents (23%) are entrepreneurs from the agriculture sector.

74%

74% say they are currently exploring the possibility of entering international markets

51%

51% indicate that while they are aware of state support, they find this support to be inadequate in meeting their current business scaling needs

42%

Majority of innovators and startups (42%) see innovation hubs as potential platforms to access funding, followed by networking opportunities, capacity building and R&D

### Strengthening Policy Development to Encourage R&D and Innovation



Investor funding is the number one issue governments must address to build innovation resilience. This is followed by fostering entrepreneurship and eradicating corruption

### Driving Innovation Inclusivity – Women, Youth, and Informal Markets

45%

Majority of entrepreneurs 45% feel that the creation of expanded market opportunities for homegrown businesses is the main key driver of innovation inclusivity. This is followed by the provision of support services and the curation of capacity development programs to address the unique challenges of operating in the informal markets are key to driving innovation inclusivity on the continent

41%

A high proportion of respondents (41%) do not feel there is enough support from the private and public sector to drive greater inclusivity within hubs and the wider innovation ecosystem

## Mozilla Roundtables

AfriLabs partnered with internet giant Mozilla to convene roundtable discussions with African startups, entrepreneurs, developers and innovators. These roundtable discussions focussed on understanding the local needs, expertise and capabilities of African countries and explored under-served issues and areas that could spur the next generation of innovation in the region.

AfriLabs partnership with Mozilla brings together two organisations committed to supporting communities of technologists by putting people first. The partnership will help develop more relevant, sustainable support for African innovators to build scalable resilient products, leveraging honest and candid discussions to identify areas of common interest.

Mozilla and AfriLabs launched exploratory research in the form of round table discussions to better understand the ecosystem, explore and identify new product ideas that solve real-life issues. The discussions were hosted as part of Mozilla's efforts to reinvest within the African tech ecosystem and support local innovators with scalable ideas that have the potential to impact across the continent.



*“Mozilla is working with AfriLabs as the aggregator of Tech hubs to come up and identify real life problems that are plaguing the continent and develop real life solutions developed by Africans for Africans not by other people. This will help us learn more about the intersection of African product needs and capacity gaps and to co-create value with local entrepreneurs”*

Alice Munyua,  
Director, Africa Innovation and  
public policy program at Mozilla



# Building capacity in a pandemic

One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is how it threatened growth and attempted to halt learning activities. Thanks to virtual technology, we moved all our workshops online and gave out funds to our community for diverse initiatives aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic in the African Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.

## AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme

*Empowering African Hubs to build a thriving innovation economy in the continent*

The AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP) is a 36 months intensive capacity building programme for African Enterprise Support Organizations (ESOs), implemented across Africa thanks to Agence Française de Développement's (AFD) support through the Digital Africa seed fund. The core objective of the programme is to build the capacity of African tech hubs to support the scaling and building of investment-ready startups across Africa, thereby strengthening the ecosystem in general. Some of our partners include Strathmore University, African Business Angels Network (ABAN) and Afric'innov. Activities like Hubs Learning Week, Capacity Building Awards, Virtual Meetup Grants and others are all a part of the ACBP, with a singular objective of supporting hubs so that they can attract investments and run local and regional impact-driven programmes that will support entrepreneurs and startups.

Learn more about the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme at [www.afrilabs-capacity.com](http://www.afrilabs-capacity.com)

“

*Every activity under the AfriLabs Capacity Building Program is geared towards building successful and investment-ready hubs and their start-ups through effective teaching, funding and mentoring.*

Temitope Isedowo,  
Director of Programmes, AfriLabs



“

*“The AfriLabs Capacity Building Program has identified the need to create more female-focused investor communities where women are fully supported in accessing business development tools, financing support and mentoring for their ventures which ultimately creates a gender-inclusive ecosystem.”*

Nanko Madu,  
Senior Programmes Manager  
and Project Lead ACBP, AfriLabs



## Activities powered by the AfriLabs CBP in 2020



Needs assessment  
and report



Curriculum and  
courses/  
workshops/training  
content  
development + HIR  
design



Toolkits  
development and  
hub profiling



Content certification



Content curation for  
virtual and physical  
capacity building



Virtual and physical  
capacity building



Quarterly hubs  
learning week



Capacity Building  
award Ceremony

# Needs Assessment Report

## *Trends and insights from ESOs, entrepreneurs, and investors*

This report uncovers the needs of ESOs, entrepreneurs and investors, as well as share emerging best practices and strategies to meet them. By highlighting key gaps, this report presents salient considerations. The needs assessment comprises analyzing quantitative and qualitative data collected from ESOs, entrepreneurs and investors through surveys and focus groups.

The report was commissioned by AfriLabs under the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme. Our partner, the African Business Angel Network (ABAN) carried out the data collection for investors.

Some key findings from the report include:

- ESOs and entrepreneurs are paying more attention to skills development and seeing it as a vital component to their success: ESOs are particularly interested in knowing how to fundraise with foundations and donors; how to create, develop and track KPIs; how to communicate and reach out to entrepreneurs; and how to manage mentors/advisors, trainers and coaches.
- ESOs and entrepreneurs increasingly recognize the importance of mentorship and coaching for their ventures' growth and prospects.
- Venture success implies much more than the availability of skills and financing. It is predicated on building a trusting relationship between entrepreneurs and investors.
- Investors want more collaboration and alignment with ESOs and entrepreneurs. This will require significant efforts from both parties.
- Women are under-represented among the population of ESOs, entrepreneurs, and investors. Women constitute only 29% of entrepreneurs, 30% of ESO founders, and 25% of investors. These statistics throw into light the gap between women and men in the African innovation ecosystem.

## AfriLabs Hubs Learning Week

*Trends and insights from ESOs, entrepreneurs, and investors*

The AfriLabs Hubs Learning week is a series of capacity building virtual workshops that empowers innovation hub managers, and staff with requisite/formal incubation management training and skills needed to start, operate and expand hubs/innovation centres in Africa. The virtual capacity building workshop is part of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP) which is a 36-month intensive capacity building programme for hubs, funded by the Agence Française de Développement. During the year, the 1st, 2nd, and the Special Edition of the learning week were held.



**22 topics were delivered**



**1,587 participants**  
from over **37 countries** and the **5 regions in Africa** were in attendance.

“

*Being a part of the Hubs Learning week has helped us learn to embed sustainability into our operations and improve the delivery framework of the startup programmes that we run*

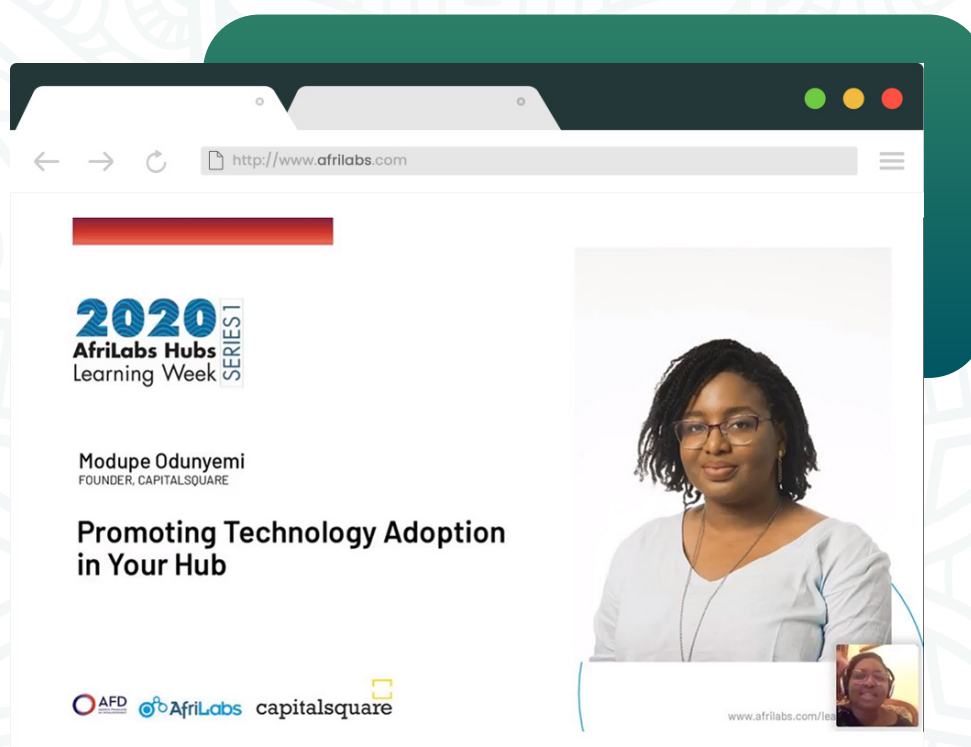
Francis Omorojie,  
Ennovate Hub, Tanzania.



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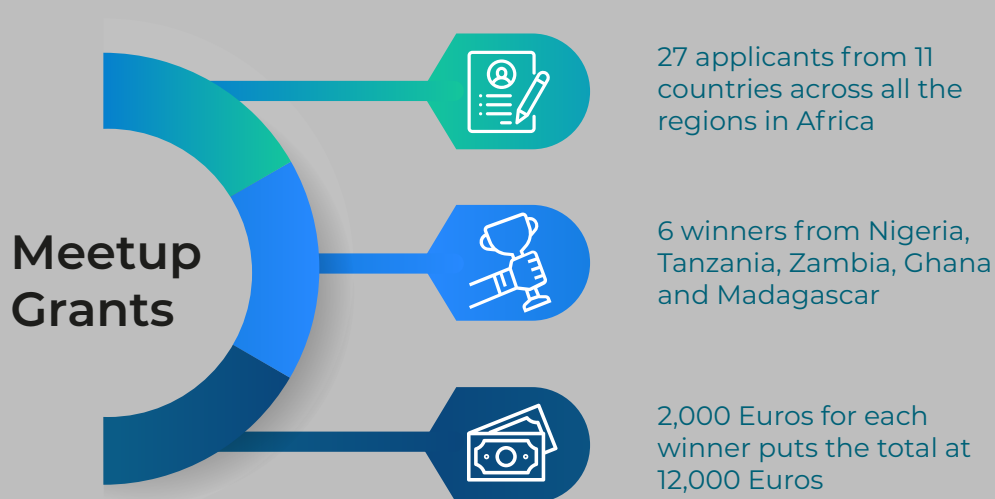
*During the 2020 AfriLabs Hubs Learning Week Special Edition, I was able to identify some skills that could be implemented in Dreams Hub, as a young Hub in our ecosystem. As Dreamers who strongly believe every dream is achievable, we understand the unavoidable need of contributing to accelerating the tech & innovation industry with sustainable business models. The cooperation within AfriLabs is a great resource for us. We congratulate all the AfriLabbers!*

Celia N.  
Programme Officer, Dreams Hub.



## Meetup Grants

After every Hubs Learning Week, we make a call for grant applications to AfriLabs members that participated to host Meetups on COVID-19, the SDGs and other relevant themes.



*TechQuest has been a beneficiary of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Program Virtual Meetup Grant and this has helped to support our bringing together of industry professionals and the government in discussing how to leverage Education Technology for underserved communities and groups*

**Ito Emembolu,**  
Director, TechQuest STEM Academy,  
Nigeria.



# Projects under the AfriLabs Virtual Meetup Grants

## Summary of the project



### BongoHive

*Zambia*

A 17-part web series on the Sustainable Development Goals, that addressed the SDGs and COVID-19. 17 experts from the private sector as well as government shared their knowledge on the various SDGs and highlights on the goals, Zambia's position/ranking, existing challenges with achieving each goal. At the beginning and end of every session, a selected healthcare professional addressed the escalating novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by sharing an overview of the current situation at the national level (as presented by the WHO and Ministry of Health of the Republic of Zambia), as well as small and large scale interventions taking place across the globe to fight the pandemic and deliver value for communities.



### Ennovate Hub

*Tanzania*

The Virtual SDG Meetup was organized as part of the #Innovation4Future Startup Webinar Series. The meetup happened in 2 series; the first series was a virtual workshop that was facilitated by company builders, investors and developmental organizations that are working directly with the SDGs and the second series was a hackathon, where participating start-ups worked in groups to design tech-driven solutions around the discussion SDGs during the workshop. The winning group were awarded a mini-grant. In regards to this virtual meetup, the focus was on SDG 3, SDG 8, SDG 17 and COVID-19.



### TechQuest STEM Academy

*Nigeria*

An online meet-up for interactive discussions on how to provide innovative solutions that can leverage digital technologies particularly for teachers and possibly parents particularly during and post the current pandemic. The meet-up also provided a means to improve the digital literacy of these groups to enable them to function in a rapidly changing technological age (consistent with SDG 4.4.1 on relevant skills and lifelong learning. This webinar was the first in the EdTech low-income schools series, where presenters gave concrete examples of uses of educational technologies in low-income schools, and low-cost implementation strategies to use Tech to continue education for the underserved. Current effects and challenges faced due to the pandemic were also discussed.



### Clean Technology Hub

*Nigeria*

Virtual SGD meetups with key stakeholders (a network of climate change advocates, startups, innovators and hubs). The key outcome of these SDG meetups was the development of a strategic climate and sustainability digital campaign around WASH campaigns in light of COVID-19. The meetups specifically addressed SDGs Goal 3 – Good Health and Well Being; Goal 4 – Quality Education; Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation; Goal 17 – Partnership for the goals. This also aligns with globally recognized COVID-19 preventive measures such as regular hand washing, use of alcohol-based sanitisers and general hygienic practices.



### Tarkwa Entrepreneurship Development Hub

*Ghana*

The project empowered deaf and dumb persons with entrepreneurship, health and leadership education and brought innovators together to brainstorm new ideas and generate solutions to basic social integration challenges of deaf and dumb persons. The meetup focussed on SDG goals 4,8,10,11 & 17 with emphasis on Goal 10 which is Reduced inequality within among countries. Disability is referenced in various parts of the SDGs and specifically in parts related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs. The deaf and dumb state of existence has been made far worse with the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and this project attempted to change the narrative starting those located within the Western Region of Ghana. The virtual meetup was done in collaboration with the Western Region Association of Deaf and Dumb, University of Mines and Technology and Ghana Hubs Network.



### Habaka Hub

*Madagascar*

The program was a virtual meeting comprising several breakout training sessions that allowed different stakeholders from diverse sectors to participate. The meetup covered relevant and representative themes that encompassed all categories of needs, ranging from the new realities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the SDGs.



### dHub Innovation Centre

*Nigeria*

FemQuip is a project that will help in financial and gender inclusion and, considering that 45% of the labour force in Nigeria are women, it will no doubt boost the economy of Kwara state and Nigeria. The FemEquip project will run for two months and the selected delegates will have the opportunity to learn from regional female business experts. FemEquip is designed to reduce the inequalities and barriers affecting women in business by accelerating progress in gender equality through entrepreneurship development, linking and learning and access to finance. The programme will cover all lesson learnt during the AfriLabs Week of Learning, building on the shared strategy to train participants on business models and technical skills to navigate through COVID-19, value chain, mentors and mentees relationship, leading a virtual enterprise, building financial and governance structure.



### Jokkolabs Banjul

*The Gambia*

In this virtual meeting, we will be engaging with start-ups, innovators and entrepreneurs in The Gambia to tackle key business practices through effective mentoring strategies ranging from best business principles, pre-incubation, incubation and operation. Aligned with the importance of Digital media and Digital Marketing in this day and age, participants will be taken through a detailed explanation of branding and marketing and how best they can utilize social media to market their goods and services by engaging with their communities both online and offline. This will be done in order to ensure that start-ups and entrepreneurs are using the best tools available in their communities to create solutions and innovation that will make life easier for their local communities. The goal of the virtual meeting is to ensure that start-ups, innovators and entrepreneurs acquire new business strategies, goal-oriented business models that ensure the creation of realistic business plans focused on impact-driven, effective business strategies that will create and buffer solutions in their local communities while also utilising digital marketing to market and monetize their goods and services online.



### TheNeoHub

*Botswana*

ODOHEG is a full-day virtual mentoring event for startups at the idea level. It combines individual virtual mentor sessions and start-up networking, focusing on business growth and personal growth.

During the event, we will work with approximately 30 mentors 20 from our existing network and 10 through a specific call for application. All mentors match our high requirements concerning the Hub's values, integrity and professional background. Each mentee will receive tools to apply their learnings within their community and also is encouraged to create their own mentoring systems and projects.



### iZone Hub

*Zimbabwe*

A platform for female founders to learn to generate their business ideas, then pitch their new/ running business ideas so as to raise awareness of them and grow their reach. Through working with the ecosystem in Harare, we aim to provide a platform for networking, collaboration, and attracting investment. We will support female founders through building their capacity to pitch their enterprises in a monthly virtual event, based on a solid business model. We will train them to get investor ready and provide market, funding and mentoring linkages as they will work with designated mentors/coaches as well as benefit from peer to peer interactions. The virtual meetups will be named #ShePitchesZW and will execute some strategies picked during the AfriLabs Learning Week. Our chief goals will be to provide a platform for female founders of all ages to pitch new and running business ideas so as to raise awareness of them and grow their reach, provide a platform for networking, collaboration and attracting investment.



### Trustee sas

*Guinea*

This virtual meeting will allow us to educate 100 young entrepreneurs (men and women) on the importance of mentoring and coaching for the proper conduct of their activities. This project will consist of an awareness and exchange session on the advantages and the need for a Mentoring and Coaching program for 100 young entrepreneurs in Guinea. The main objective is to emphasize the importance and the need to have a mentor and a coach among entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs at all stages of their business projects. the specific objectives are: - knowing how to choose your mentor and coach - How to prepare and identify these



## Zixtech HUB

Cameroon

expectations with regard to a coach or mentor - the match between mentees and mentors to better succeed in the exchange and support (find the best practices). These objectives will be achieved by putting into practice the advice and techniques learned during the theoretical sessions. This will be done by organizing a speed coaching workshops for 3 startups. success or failure in achieving our objectives will be measured by the number of participants and their feedback on the understanding of the themes addressed.

This project is aimed at boosting mentorship and coaching through a 5 part series that will span a period of 1month 1 week (5 weeks ) of actively engaging participants virtually.

This project will source successful national and local business leaders and diaspora experts. This will give perspective and active bond during the sessions. The outcome is to enhance growth and initiate a long term relationship between mentors and participants. The solution-focused coaching model will help participants focus on solutions and not problems. The goal of the project is to enhance mentoring and coaching with the community partners \*(startups, developers, stakeholders, organizations), with the focus of using the tool of mentoring and coaching to boost productivity and efficiency of our startups. Reducing the failure rate through mentorship and coaching.

The goals will be achieved through the 5 part series Virtual sessions with specialized focused groups, guided partnership and collaboration sessions, Coaching Supervision, 6 levels of coaching, Thinking environment, Creative process, Storytelling coach, Solution-focused mentorship and coaching, Integral Model, Development stage frameworks, hackathon.

## Capacity Building Awards

The Capacity Building Awards program is an initiative within AfriLabs CBP that provides grants to winning hubs in the AfriLabs network to implement projects for the hubs and startups in their network.

Grants of 15,000 euros per hub and 30, 000 euros for joint proposals submitted by 2 hubs were awarded to successful applicants to fund existing projects or ideas with proof of concept on the application of knowledge gained from engaging in AfriLabs activities over the past year. A total of 17 hubs were successful and 255,000 Euros was awarded.

These projects are targeted at the hub and should position them better in meeting their missions and mandate to their immediate community more effectively. As part of the award, winning hubs also access free training and mentoring during the grant implementation period to enhance their chances of succeeding as Hubs.



*The Capacity Building Award will help us increase the number of early-stage startups that will benefit through our venture building fund. We hope to provide transformative business capacity building and investment support to more than 10 startups per year.*

Francis Omorojie,  
Founder, Ennovate Hub,  
Tanzania



*"The ACBP Awards is helping us to tackle the gap in collaboration among African hubs, fix key hub capacity challenges and actively engage member hubs."*

Temitope Isedowo,  
Director of Programme,  
AfriLabs.





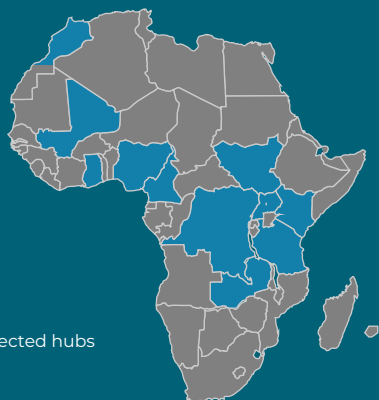
67 hubs applied across  
22 African countries



17 hubs were selected for  
12 projects



3 of these projects are  
regional collaboration  
efforts between 8 hubs

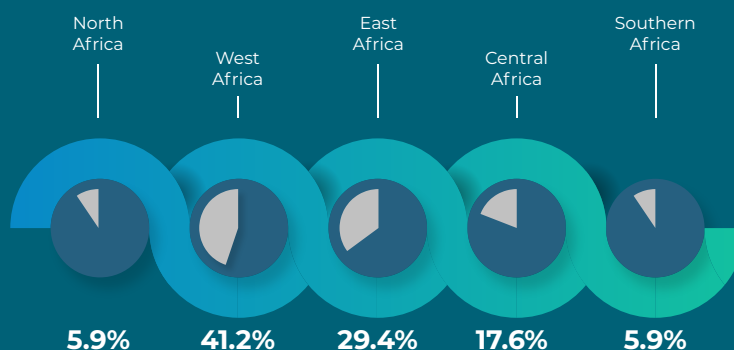


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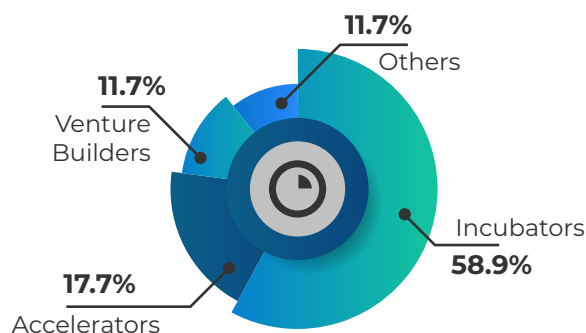
Selected hubs

Selected hubs are situated in  
Morocco, Nigeria, Congo -DRC,  
Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Cabo Verde,  
Zambia, Cameroon, South Sudan,  
Tanzania and Mali

North Africa produced 5.9% of the selected hubs, West Africa produced 41.2%, East Africa 29.4%, Central Africa 17.6% and Southern Africa 5.9%



Each hub received  
**15,000 Euros** which  
puts the total grant  
money for this cohort  
at **255,000 Euros**



**29.4%** of the selected  
hubs are **female-led**

## Categories:

Investor and  
Mentor Network  
Building and  
Matching **3**

Virtual  
Incubation **2**

Women  
support **10**

Business  
Clinic **2**

# Projects under the Capacity Building Awards

## JACARANDA HUB AND GODO HUB

**City:** Lusaka and Lagos  
**Country:** Zambia & Nigeria  
**Region:** East Africa & West Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

### PROJECTED IMPACT

Support 100 Zambian startups

Create a supportive and responsive mentor network of up to 200 Zambian, Nigerian and mentors of other nationalities

Support the culmination of investments in 15% of startups in the program

Provide qualified startups with a one time grant of \$10,000



### CATEGORY

Investor & Mentor  
Networks Building and  
Matching

### PROJECT SUMMARY

The project will involve a 6-month training program leveraging a structured curriculum in training selected startups for entrepreneurial success and investor readiness, building a network of selected mentors, funding from a social crowdfunding initiative for selected startups and matching trained and mentored startups with local and global investors.

## ENNOVATE HUB

**City:** Dar-es-salaam  
**Country:** Tanzania  
**Region:** East Africa  
**Status:** Ongoing

### PROJECTED IMPACT

Build the capacity of 100 early stage underrepresented startups in East Africa, prepare them for investment and increase their chances of becoming successful companies.



### CATEGORY

Investor & Mentor  
Networks Building and  
Matching

### PROJECT SUMMARY

A project that leverages virtual venture building services and investors fireside sessions to amplify business operations of early stage startups, then connect them to a pool of active investors through an investment marketplace. The project is currently underway and is designed to run one cohort per quarter (that is 4 cohorts per year), where 10 startups are selected into each cohort through a defined due diligence process. Know more here: [ventures.ennovatehub.com/startups](https://ventures.ennovatehub.com/startups)

### ROAR NIGERIA AND CINOLU

**City:** Lagos and Lubumbashi  
**Country:** Nigeria and Congo  
**Region:** West Africa and Central Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

#### PROJECTED IMPACT

Pilot one acceleration cohort and 2 incubation cohorts from both countries

Sign up 30 more countries from North, East, Central, West and Southern Africa

Register a national pool of 50 expert trainers, 50 coaches and mentors and incubate at least 100-150 startups across 12 countries.



#### CATEGORY

Virtual Incubation

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

The program called the 'Den' will have a wide reach of participants in the innovation ecosystems across Africa, cross cultural and multilingual products and services, wide range of local and international mentors, and be fully virtual. It would be implemented through Work Packages [WPs].

### INGENIOUS CITY

**City:** Ngaliema  
**Country:** Democratic Republic of Congo  
**Region:** Central Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

#### PROJECTED IMPACT

Build capacity and follow 200 women across the DRC and boost the employability of young girls as well.



#### CATEGORY

Virtual Incubation

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

A Learning Management system with content tailored for wide dissemination throughout the DRC territory as well as for monitoring and reporting. It is a platform that allows one to put all training documents online for our incubates, regardless of the format, and to track the progress of candidates through tests and their scores.

### RECYCLE UP

**City:** Cape Coast  
**Country:** Ghana  
**Region:** West Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

#### PROJECTED IMPACT

Up to 50 successful applicants will be invited to the Startup Weekend of basic entrepreneurial training, sales pitch training, networking skills training and presentation workshops.

The Incubation Period will admit a maximum of 6 teams not more than 25 participants.



#### CATEGORY

Business Clinics

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

An Incubator Program [RUG Incubator] designed to bridge that gap by providing the much needed business acceleration and early stage incubation support to budding entrepreneurs to empower them to build successful businesses. The RUG Incubator will focus on thematic areas such as: waste management and recycling, water, sanitation and hygiene, renewable energy, ICT and others.

**ACTIVSPACES**

**City:** Buea  
**Country:** Cameroon  
**Region:** Central Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

**CATEGORY**

Business Clinics

**PROJECTED IMPACT**

Project activities include seminars on entrepreneurship, incubation program to incubate entrepreneurs in tech and agritech, creation of mentorship programs, incubation and acceleration programs, local university outreach and introduce women to entrepreneurship and the use of numeric 3 times a year.

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The establishment of more Activspaces locations in rural area zones to create and promote Business clinics where start-ups are trained on financial management, communications and marketing, training on digital marketing and use of digital tools, and incubator programs. The project plans to expand ActivSpaces to more rural zones, recruit and use the space to establish already running activities.

**TECHQUEST STEM**

**City:** Lagos and Juba  
**Country:** Nigeria and South Sudan  
**Region:** West Africa and North Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

**CATEGORY**

Women support category

**PROJECTED IMPACT**

400 female entrepreneurs and 100 female-led businesses over a course of 3 months.

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

A Female Entrepreneurship Support Programme (FESP). The program aims to provide capability building training, business support coaching and mentorship for females intending to go into business, nascent female-led start-ups and entrepreneurs.

**DOUAR TECH**

**City:** Rabat  
**Country:** Morocco  
**Region:** North Africa  
**Status:** Yet to start

**CATEGORY**

Women support category

**PROJECTED IMPACT**

A program to incentivize female entrepreneurs to regenerate their projects through a collaborative system of strong female leaders. The project will emphasize instrumental aspects of successful entrepreneurship, such as financial literacy and marketing, as well as a focus on the UN Sustainable Goals.

**HIVE COLAB**

**City:** Kampala  
**Country:** Uganda  
**Region:** East Africa  
**Status:**

**CATEGORY**

Women support  
category

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

A Business development services to 300 women owned and run Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises to reconfigure their businesses during and post COVID-19 recovery therefore creating long-term value for MSEs from customers, markets, and relationships.

**PROJECTED IMPACT**

300 female business recruited into the program, business Skilling tools and content, training materials for MSMEs using smart solutions accessible in audio and video form through basic and smart phones, supported registration, digitization to be bankable and access loans, and a demo day to investors over a period of 7 months.

**ELDO HUB AND MAIO BUSINESS CENTER**

**City:** Eldoret and Porto Ingle  
**Country:** Kenya and Cape Verde  
**Region:** East Africa and Central Africa  
**Status:**

**CATEGORY**

Women support  
category

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

A project to enable digitization of women-led businesses in Kenya and Cape Verde. The project will adopt the following components of programme methodology in order to achieve the anticipated results: digitization of business process adoption, sector-wide approach, building competitive, sustainable and resilient women-led businesses with a series of other activities.

**PROJECTED IMPACT**

60 women between the age of 18 to 40 years across Kenya and Cape Verde to support them in creating successful solutions in their entrepreneurial initiatives that will leverage digital technologies to address challenges in their respective businesses.

**WENNOVATION HUB**

**City:** Abuja  
**Country:** Nigeria  
**Region:** West Africa  
**Status:**

**CATEGORY**

Women support  
category

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

A project that is focused on translating Female Led Innovative Ideas into Concrete Business Solutions through screening, mentoring & capacity support during pre-incubation, ultimately serving as a pipeline for the hubs Incubation Programs. The project entails a series of learning workshops for coaching female led businesses on growth methodologies and sustainability in the wake of the COVID19 pandemic and beyond. With a targeted reach o

**PROJECTED IMPACT**

50 female founders (female led ventures), a 2day training bootcamp and 12 weeks mentorship workshop.

## MAKERERE INNOVATION AND INCUBATION CENTRE

**City:** Kampala  
**Country:** Uganda  
**Region:** East Africa  
**Status:**

### PROJECTED IMPACT

The project will take in 100 women enterprises, provide support through the business clinics, and graduate at least 4 sustainable women startups with the growth potential to become mid-large size companies



### CATEGORY

Women support category

### PROJECT SUMMARY

A Women Enterprise Development Program to foster the mindset change that makes it a reliable creator of new Women enterprises that grow into successful medium or large-sized companies. The project is based on the Lean Startup approach: Agile Development, Business model generation, and Customer development. The primary focus of the project will be to identify women enterprises, incubate these enterprises and scale them to medium and large enterprises in the next one year.

## DONILAB

**City:** Bamako  
**Country:** Republic of Mali  
**Region:** West Africa  
**Status:**

### PROJECTED IMPACT

50 active women informed about innovation tools and financing preparation techniques



### CATEGORY

Women support category

### PROJECT SUMMARY

An entrepreneurial capacity building program for women agro-entrepreneurs by raising awareness about the use of new technologies and preparing financing. This is a support program aimed at accelerating the growth of companies led by women in the Ségou region of Mali through technology, skills building and economic networking.

## AU-AGA Virtual Accelerator

### *African Union - African Governance Architecture Innovation Challenge Virtual Accelerator on Democracy and Governance.*

The African Union - African Governance Architecture (AGA) organized a Youth Innovation Challenge calling for African innovators, incubation centres and innovation hubs with initiatives that contribute to democracy and good governance. Innovators across Africa and the diaspora responded with a total of 20 shortlisted innovators, who then received support through a one-week virtual accelerator training powered by AfriLabs. This program like our other capacity-building programs at AfriLabs aimed to grow the participating innovators and their innovations. It was implemented under the AGA - COMESA joint project on youth engagement in democratic governance and sociology economic development processes in Africa in support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The virtual accelerator held from the 23rd - 27th November 2020, facilitated by experts who impacted crucial industry, technical and business knowledge through intensive training sessions on; Democracy, Public Policy and Social Change, Building Innovation Driven Business Models, Business Management & Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Marketing and Customer Acquisition, Business & Digital Communication, and Investment Readiness & Building Partnerships. We had daily coach check-ins with innovators, an inspirational talk session by top industry professionals, a pitch day, and then a follow-on coaching session. At the end of the program, the top 5 innovators were selected for recognition and awards. The selection was based on different evaluations carried out pre, during and post the program.

#### **List of countries that were represented by the participants**

Nigeria	South Africa
Uganda	SIERRA LEONE
Egypt	Mozambique
Comoros/France Diaspora	Kenya
Benin	Tunisia
DR Congo	Congo
Lesotho	South Sudan
Botswana	



**Key**

■ Countries represented in the AU Virtual Accelerator

“

*The initiative is to bring together innovators, to promote people's rights and human services rights across Africa.*

Amb. Salah Hammad,  
Head of the AGA Secretariat



“

*We need to ensure we live in peace as Africans and support each other so we can be amongst the countries that have their youths contribute to the development of democracy and good governance.*

Mrs Beatrice Hamusonde,  
Director for Gender and  
Social Affairs, COMESA



# The AfriLabs Annual Gathering - The Virtual Edition

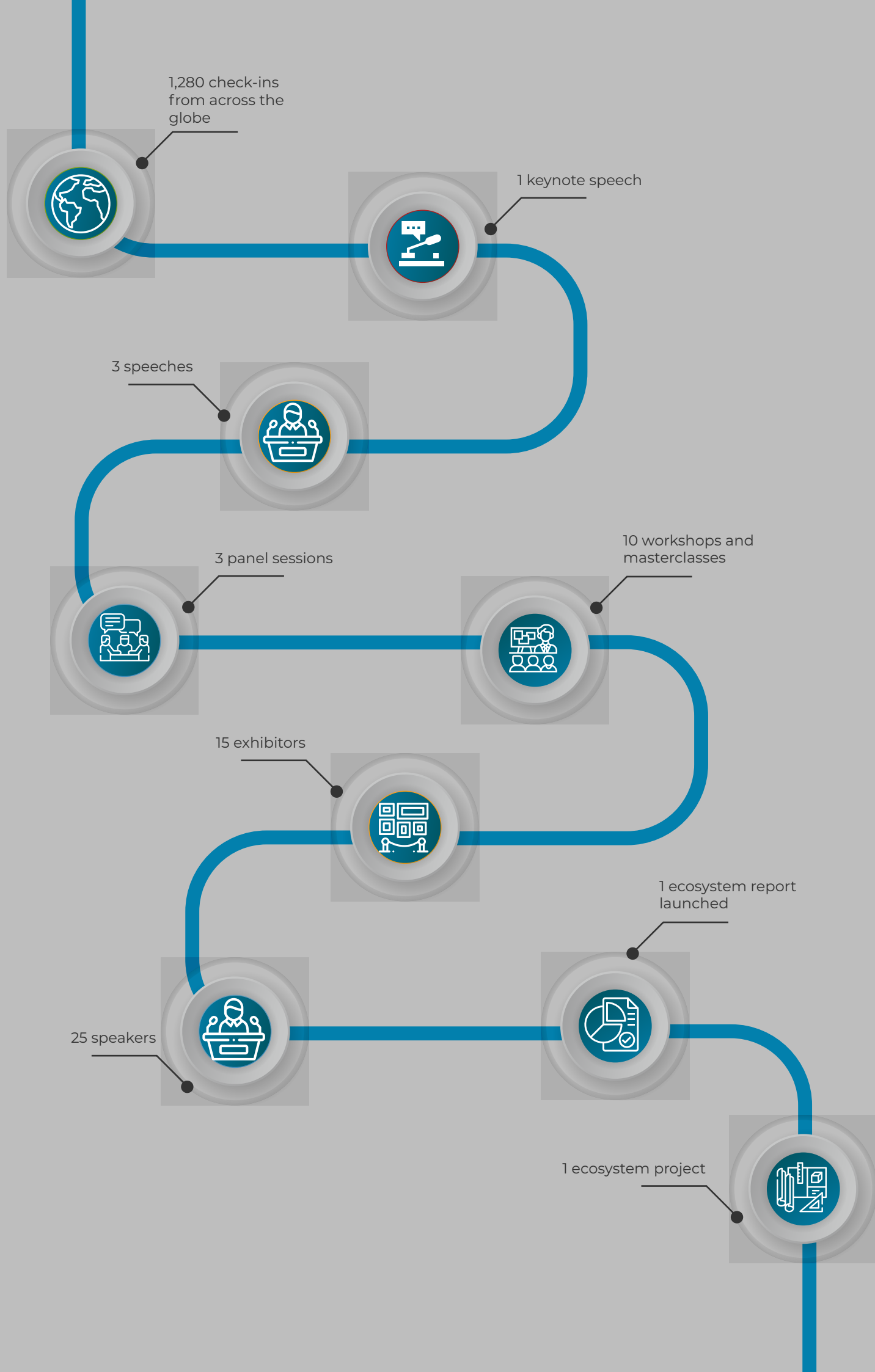
In previous years, we hosted and participated in several physical events with the most significant being the AfriLabs Annual Gathering. In 2020, due to the lockdowns and advice from health bodies, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) to stay home and stay safe, we hosted our events online.

It was a learning experience when we hosted the 2020 AfriLabs Annual Gathering. We tried to bring the same signature experience associated with the previous physical versions to the virtual edition.

The AfriLabs Annual Gathering provides a unique opportunity for tech hubs, innovators, academia, stakeholders, and other relevant players in the African tech and Innovation ecosystem to convene, network, and share knowledge on different areas/ sectors about the tech and innovation ecosystem in Africa.

The 5th edition of the AfriLabs Annual Gathering was themed “Building a Resilient Innovative Africa” held from the 12th-14th October 2020. This was inspired by the current realities facing stakeholders of the innovative economy in Africa. Panel sessions and debates, ecosystem report launch, an award ceremony, happy hours, workshops, masterclasses, exhibitions and features that allow participants to have one-on-ones with themselves and with speakers, this year’s virtual gathering was an exciting and impactful experience.

Learn more about the AfriLabs Annual Gathering at [www.afrilabs-gathering.com](http://www.afrilabs-gathering.com)



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*“This year the theme “Building a Resilient Innovative Africa” could never have been more apt to the situation our Ecosystem faced in 2020 with the COVID-19 Pandemic.*

*It was crucial to maintain the networking and collaborative element of the in-person AfriLabs Annual Gathering of previous years which goes a long way in shaping the face of the African tech Ecosystem in the new year. Watching the collaborations formed from this year's gathering and connections established from the networking avenues provided was all the validation that we needed. The Content provided this year was specifically designed to be engaging, encouraging and aligned to address the current issues plaguing our Ecosystem. The feedback received so far has illuminated that the content was indeed impactful and incredibly knowledge imparting to all the attendees.*

Jennifer Okeke-Ojiudu,  
Events Lead, AfriLabs



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The AfriLabs Annual Gathering 2020 provided an opportunity for us to continuously improve and learn from peer networks and even in our work we have learnt so many new things

Emmanuel Lobijo,  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Junub Open Space, South Sudan



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*The AfriLabs Annual Gathering is a place to learn about the technological impacts happening in the Africa continent and also to discover the technological roadmap for the continent for the coming year. It was fascinating learning about Tòmi Davies' 3 C's (Character, Confidence, Coachability) that guides him to know whether a founder or founding team is ready to build a business that matters.*

Samuel Omokhaye,  
Program Manager,  
Wennovention Hub.



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*Les sujets discutés et l'expérience des intervenants étaient très riches, c'était moralisant, instructif et prometteur surtout dans la situation du COVID que nous traversons actuellement en tant que Hub. Je ne vais pas manquer de notifier la bonne coordination des sessions qui a reflété une association harmonieuse et professionnelle du travail fait par les organisateurs et leur partenaires. Tout simplement, AfriLabs est un model parfait de la résilience. Comme Rebecca Enonchong l'a dit dans l'une de ses sessions : nous avons toujours développé la résilience en nous depuis. Vive toute la Communauté d'AfriLabs!*

Sarobidy N. RAKOTOARIVO,  
Habaka (Madagascar Innovation Hub),  
Coworking space and Event Manager



# 2020 AfriLabs Annual Gathering Partners



# 2021: A year of celebration, reflection and moving forward

*A final note by Rebecca Enonchong, Board Chair, AfriLabs*

Africa is at a very crucial crossroad. Whenever there's a crisis on a grand scale, there are always phoenixes that will rise from the ashes of the chaos. COVID-19 showed us that sustainable growth is the only kind of growth that can stand the test of time. Our structures were tried and we saw what is working and what isn't. We are in the right place and time to start building what will last.

AfriLabs will be 10 years old in 2021, and this says a lot about how far the African innovation ecosystem has come. There is so much to unpack from the last decade but most of all, we are beginning to see our impact on the economy of Africa. Startups have moved from indie spaces to the mainstream, providing daily solutions to an increasing number of the population living in Africa. They are creating employment as they scale, empowering people and improving lives. That's the vision: a self-sufficient African economy leveraging a thriving innovation community on the continent. Behind the scene are innovation hubs, playing a pivot role in providing support for many of these startups. This year, some structures increased capacity, went into strategic partnerships, launched new initiatives, opened new centres and took in more startups, all in a pandemic! It was no coincidence that we added 70 hubs to the AfriLabs network this year. These superheroes kept looking for more support so that they could do more. That's the resilience we love to see!

2020 was also a sober year that provided the right ambience for retrospection. We all had to think hard about what we are doing, how we are doing it and how we could do it better. That's what adapting and surviving during the COVID pandemic meant to many of us.

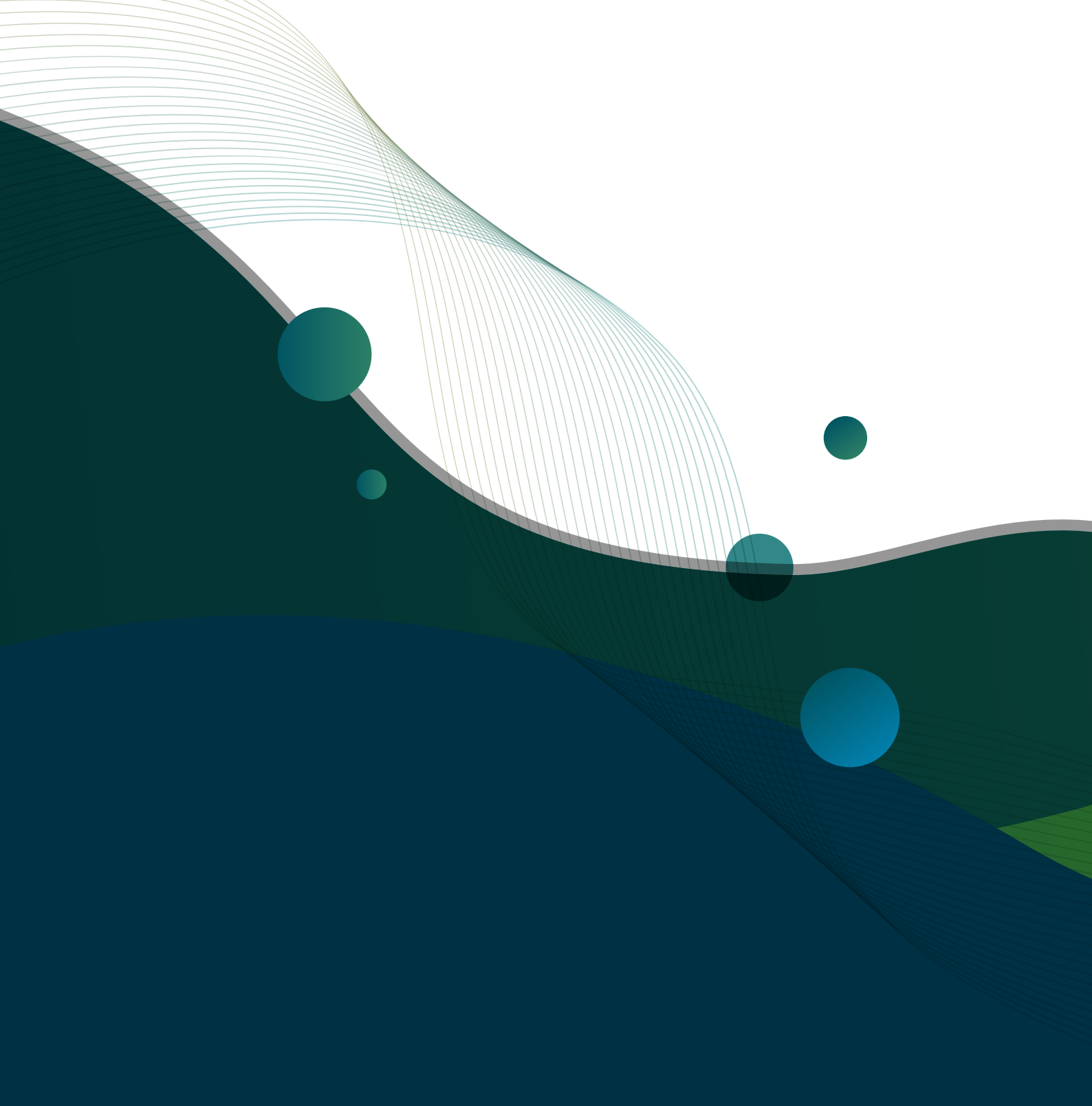
2021 will be a year of mixed feelings, maybe a tinge of survival guilt, but celebrations will not be out of place. It is right for us to acknowledge our journey so far.

A good itinerary for 2021 could be to celebrate our wins in the past decade, admit our errors, document our lessons, put our hands together and move forward into a new phase of building sustainable interventions for a great future.

Dear ecosystem stakeholder and builder, AfriLabs and our community look forward to working with you in the new year as we push for more impact in the African Innovation Economy. Let's do it!

With love from a fellow stakeholder,

*Rebecca Enonchong*



Website: [www.afrilabs.com](http://www.afrilabs.com)

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