



Africa Beyond 2020

Sahara Sparks

Sahara Sparks 2020 is putting on a spotlight the paradigm shift Africa is experiencing as the rest of the world from how business is done, to priority sectors in the region to the future of work, workforce and workplace that is brought by unprecedented incidents, shifting in socio-cultural environments, digital adoption and economic transitioning that both private organization, public organizations and individuals are and have faced.

With the high and accelerated growth of digital economy specifically platform economy, gig economy and sharing economy, the informal sector is proven to be the future of jobs and work and as of 2020, the present too. How is Africa strategically investing in this sector and capitalizing on technology and globalization to accelerate individual and regional socio-economic growth?

The shifting change of customers and citizens behaviors and needs has challenged both the private and public sector to find more effective, reliable and impactful ways to deliver services. Limited access to infrastructures in most parts of the region has been one of the challenges that has widened the inclusion gap. How is Africa prepared moving forward? How should both the private and public sector work to ensure that the region's development is accelerated, encouraged and widened?

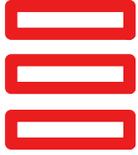
Biological and Environmental challenges have accelerated the gap in gender inclusion, employment and with unprecedented challenges like COVID-19, gender violence and gender digital gap has spiked in 2020. In many ways this shift has put in a spotlight some of the areas that as a region we need to invest in with urgency. What should be done to remedy the situation?

The shift has also brought in massive impact in the investment landscape especially in the tech-entrepreneurship ecosystem in Africa. The African venture funding has slowed but there is a rise of impact investors especially on specific sectors like health and agriculture. How is this going to impact the tech-entrepreneurship space generally? African startups have also made some survival moves that have guaranteed their survival, how do we support them moving forward?

6th Floor, Wing A
Al Dua Tower,
New Bagamoyo Road
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania.

lead@saharasparks.com
www.saharasparks.com





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Leading Discussions

Maximizing Digital Dividends For All.

Digitalization and digital technologies are spreading rapidly, boosting socio-economic growth, expanded opportunities and improved service delivery but the digital gap in Africa is still so massive that limits the impact brought by this growth. According to World Bank, there are three key areas that need specific focus when it comes to digital dividends, which are: a regulatory framework that encourages the market while protecting consumers; technical skills that enable workers, business owners and public sector employees to leverage new technologies; and responsible institutions that use the internet to empower their citizens.

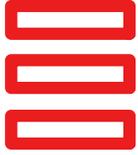
African Business Capitalizing on Platform Economy.

In the midst of a massive socio-political, environmental, and cultural shift, Africa has experienced a great tech-shift of all time. Although a lot of SMEs were already using tech platforms to advertise & sell, and a lot of big companies were transitioning into tech adoption, even further the COVID-19 crisis has forced the majority of this community to rely on tech platforms for operations, sustainability, and relevance. Do we see this become the new future of African businesses or is it just a survival strategy for now? How do we capitalize on the current shifts to have a better business landscape and grow a stronger economy?

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Gig Economy and The Future of Jobs in Africa.

By 2035, Africa will contribute more people to the workforce each year than the rest of the world combined. The continent needs to create more than 18 million new jobs each year, Africa's readiness to convert informal markets into formality is critical for its future. The future of work in Africa is no longer whether it will be formal or informal, but how digital platforms and new technologies might make this type of work more productive and of a better quality for workers themselves.

Adopting Technology For Social Good.

Technology has played a crucial role in facilitating growing globalization and digitalization which has impacted hugely social-economic development of African communities. Technology can bring efficiency, address pressing business concerns, and convenience to human society. But also emerging technologies have encouraged information overload, data ownership and privacy have become a greatest concern and there is an increased digital gap. How do we make sure technology adoption is inclusive, systematically supportive and positively impactful.

Signed

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