

Ah Africa! Unpacking the human capital opportunity

 By [Ndeye Diagne](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

14 Jan 2022

Despite the political, social, and economic challenges of the continent, the opportunities are boundless as economies work to improve governance and a new crop of African leaders rises to steer us into a brighter future.



Technology is quantum leaping the continent with mobile levelling the playing field, along with ample opportunities for learning, business, health, and quality of life. While entrepreneurship and hustling have always been about survival it has now since taken an aspirational slant, as even those in formal employment dream about possibilities.

Global venture capitalists are taking note and injecting investment into unicorn startups across the continent. Because in experiencing all her different countries for yourself, you can't help falling in love with Africa.



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Ivan Mroke, CEO, South Africa, Insights Division, Kantar, clarifies, "I stand among the rising number of Afro-enthusiasts who are now blurring the false reality of South Africa as a separate entity to Africa. I can't think of a better speech than the goosebump-inducing 'I am an African' by our former president Thabo Mbeki, which captures the essence of what it is to be part of this amazing continent after many years of isolation. I love how we are transcending the artificial borders across Africa."

Mroke continues, "Of course, we are still fighting the cliché that 'Africa is a country', but the similarities that bind the countries on the continent are becoming more important for marketers, and businesspeople with pan-African ambitions. With tighter budgets, we need a broader lens. That's where commonalities help, as do the differences, in connecting where it matters."

Sticking with former presidents as founts of knowledge, Nelson Mandela himself said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." That's why putting education and talent development at the heart of what brands

do is a huge opportunity and a business imperative to develop in Africa, because more educated young Africans means more talent for businesses, more startups and more creation.

It's also a sustainability issue, as it will create the conditions for further growth. Young people of Africa are yearning to do more and ultimately achieve financial success, with 96% of Gen Z listing financial success as one of their key goals.



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Charles Foster and Ilse Dinner, Kantar 8 May 2015



Tap into that African optimism

You can't deny the powerful sense of possibility and Africa's belief in new capabilities is an interesting thread that's been consistent over the years. It strikes me in each round of the Africa Life report just how much that energy strengthens, becoming more enabling and powerful – even during a global pandemic.

For example: while optimism has decreased everywhere in the world, the most resilient African nations' confidence levels remain close to what they were pre-Covid. Africa is still ahead of the curve on go-getting, ambition, development, and growth, with manifestations of this most evident in the world of creation and entrepreneurship. It's essentially Africa's new deal, which businesses need to harness and respond to if they want to win. It's a beautiful challenge.

After the rising narrative of the past decade, we're again hearing about the African Renaissance. The term was coined in the 1950s in Senegal by Cheikh Anta Diop when it was just a hope, possibility, and ambition, but now, it increasingly feels like a reality. Enabled by the creativity of Africa's people, it's not only about receiving but also giving, contributing towards, and inspiring the rest of the world. As technology is the ultimate enabler, it's been hugely inspiring to see Google's plans in Africa for the next 4 years, with \$1bn of investment allocated for tech, entrepreneurship, arts, and culture.



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Africa pulsates with opportunities, but you must love the continent to sustain that momentum, or else you risk losing sight of the forest for the trees. The great Mohamed Ali said it best, "A man who has no imagination has no wings."

It's time to leverage the human insights, data-inspired patterns, and energies to shape the future of growth we want to achieve in Africa.

Watch out for our follow-up deep-dives that cover the 4 specific intersections of the changing dynamics of the African marketplace in the informal sector opportunity; the education and unconventional ideas opportunity; the culture, social commerce, and tech opportunity; and the entrepreneurship and human capital opportunity.

Find out all about Africa Life [here](#). With a focus on understanding the youth and the women of Africa. Missed the live launch? [Register](#) to watch the hour-long brand learning session on demand.



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Ah, Africa! One step forward, two beats ahead with Africa Life by Kantar

Ndeye Diagne, Kantar 16 Sep 2021



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