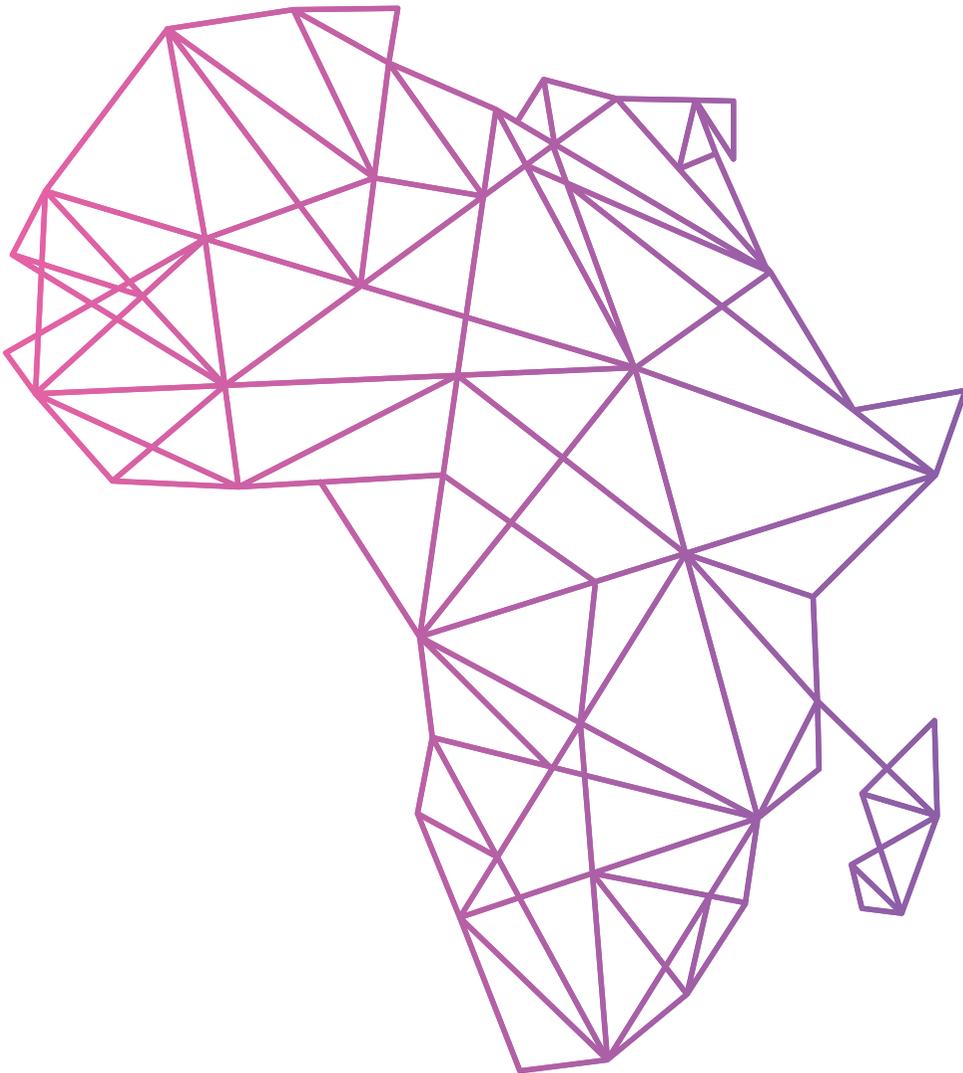


Bloomberg

**Africa  
Business  
Media  
Innovator  
Chats**

December 2020



Matthew Winkler,  
Bloomberg News Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief, Emeritus

# Coronavirus Is Helping Africa Economies Compete

Remote commerce was part of a boom before Covid-19. Now that's tending to limit the damage.

When all is said and done in 2020, African economies will probably have outperformed the rest of the world during the coronavirus pandemic. Africa's 54 countries now include seven of the globe's 10 fastest-growing economies, in part because the lethal virus may have improved their competitive advantage as they accelerated their decade-long transformation from exporters of natural resources to hubs of wireless, remotely engaged commerce.

The transition to technology-driven, 21st-century business in a region where people are younger than anywhere else is reflected in the changing landscape of the 1,300 publicly traded companies that make up corporate Africa. Communications firms have become a robust presence, making up 29% of the total market capitalization of the continent in 2020 compared to 13% a decade earlier, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Materials and energy, the region's benchmarks since colonial times, declined to 23% from 34% during the same period.

Africa has held off the Covid-19 assault better than many developing regions. The coronavirus had receded by mid-November in some of the continent's largest countries – South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia – to their lowest levels since April or May, according to data compiled by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of

Public Health. In contrast, Mexico earlier this month became the fourth country to exceed 100,000 confirmed Covid-19 deaths behind the U.S. (257,929), Brazil (169,485), and India (134,218), amid a recent global virus resurgence. South Africa, Africa's sixth-most populous country, suffered 20,968 deaths among its 767,759 Covid-19 cases.<sup>1</sup>

The economies of Ethiopia, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya withstood the economic impact of the pandemic so successfully that they were among the world's 10 fastest-growing in 2020. At least five of them are expected to remain in that elite growth club through 2022, according to forecasts by economists compiled by Bloomberg during the past three months. Two years ago, Africa included only three of the best performers and four in 2015.

Since the Bloomberg Media Initiative Africa began little more than seven years ago, the story of opportunity, growth and innovation in the most dynamic continent has become ever more relevant to the rest of the world. All of us associated with BMIA look forward to another year elevating the quality of economic and financial reporting and inspiring so many business media endeavors in the second most populous region, north to south and east to west.

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<sup>1</sup> Covid-19 Statistics as of November 23, 2020.



**Erana Stennett**, BMIA Director

## Introduction

The Africa Business Media Innovators (ABMI) program is a unique convening that brings together every year global media owners, c-suite executives, and senior thought leaders from business, government, philanthropy, and civil society.

Together, participants share best practices, emerging trends and integrated company strategies that provide unique value to their audiences.

Launched by Mike Bloomberg in South Africa in 2014, ABMI is part of the Bloomberg Media Initiative Africa (BMIA) which is designed to advance business journalism in Africa and accelerate development of a globally competitive media and financial reporting industry through a range of training programs for journalists and editors, an annual convening for media executives and other sector leaders, and support for community media.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic that emerged in 2020, the planned in-person ABMI20 was postponed until 2021, said BMIA program director Erana Stennett, pivoting instead to the virtual two-day long ABMI20 Innovator Chats, which were attended by 239 viewers from across the globe, examining the immense and unprecedented disruption to the media landscape, highlighting innovative ways to expand the media sector at a time when public health is critical, the industrys rapid transition to digital, and new partnerships vital to building a stronger future.



**Justin Smith,**  
Bloomberg Media CEO

## Welcome

"With an unrelenting global pandemic, major economic and social disruption, and national elections across the globe, there has never been a time when it was more important for citizens and leaders across all sectors to have access to fact-based and timely journalism, providing fair and comprehensive coverage of the issues that impact our health, our prosperity, our democratic rights and our governance," said Justin Smith, Bloomberg Media CEO.

The ABMI20 Innovator Chats, he said, would cover the impact of COVID-19 on African economies, highlight media innovators breaking new ground, from remote work to paywalls and growing subscription models.

" We will examine the growing conversations about the African narrative, and who best should tell the continent's story fully and accurately. As the pandemic reaches more rural and remote areas, we will explore the role of both community and legacy media and how both can continue to thrive and survive at a time when a free and fair press is increasingly vital."

# Speakers and Moderators



**Dr. Akinwumi Adesina**  
President, African  
Development Bank  
(AfDB)



**Tomiwa Aladekomo**  
CEO, Big Cabal Media



**Heba Aly**  
Director, The New  
Humanitarian



**Rich Antoniello**  
CEO, Complex  
Networks



**Samuel Attah-Mensah**  
Managing Director,  
Omni Media Ltd



**Styli Charalambous**  
Publisher and CEO,  
Daily Maverick, South  
Africa



**Teresa Clarke**  
Chairman and CEO,  
Africa.com



**Dr. Edith Dankwa**  
CEO, Business and  
Financial Times Limited



**Aguil Deng**  
Program Manager,  
Bloomberg Media  
Initiative Africa



**Dan Finch**  
Co-Founder and Chief  
Commercial Officer,  
Simplestream



**Professor Dugan Fraser**  
Centre for Learning on  
Evaluation and Results,  
University of Witwatersrand



**Paula Fray**  
CEO, frayintermedia



**Biongotlo Gaselahwe**  
Africa Economist,  
Bloomberg News



**Scott Havens**  
Chief Growth Officer  
and Global Head of  
Strategic Partnerships,  
Bloomberg Media



**Yinka Ibukun**  
West Africa Bureau Chief,  
Bloomberg News

# Speakers and Moderators



**Uzodinma Iweala**  
Author and CEO,  
The Africa Center



**Honorable Pinky Kekana**  
Deputy Minister of  
Communications,  
South Africa



**Almar Latour**  
CEO, Dow Jones  
and Company



**Honorable Cina Lawson**  
Minister of Digital  
Economy and Digital  
Transformation, Togo



**Tshepo Mahloele**  
Chairman and  
Founder, Lebashe  
Investment Group



**Moky Makura**  
Executive Director,  
Africa No Filter



**Paul McNally**  
Co-founder,  
Volume Africa



**Koketso Moeti**  
Executive Director,  
amandla.mobi



**Nigel Mugamu**  
Founder,  
263 Chat



**Nanjala Nyabola**  
Author and Host,  
Executive Producer,  
Things Fall Apart  
Podcast Series



**Max Okeyo**  
Head of Strategy  
and Innovation,  
Nation Media Group PLC



**Dapo Olorunyomi**  
Publisher,  
Premium Times  
Newspapers



**Anthony Osae-Brown**  
Nigeria Bureau Chief,  
Bloomberg News



**Bilal Randeree**  
Program Director for  
Africa and MENA,  
Media Development  
Investment Fund



**Anya Schiffrin**  
Director of Technology,  
Media, and  
Communications  
Specialization,  
Columbia University

## Speakers and Moderators



**Zach Seward**  
Co-founder and  
CEO, Quartz



**Joel Simon**  
Executive Director,  
Committee to Protect  
Journalists (CPJ)



**Pamela Sittoni**  
Executive Editor,  
Nation Media Group PLC



**Karen Toulon**  
Senior Writer,  
Bloomberg News



**Darren Walker**  
President,  
Ford Foundation

## Bloomberg hosts



**Justin Smith**  
CEO,  
Bloomberg Media



**Erana Stennett**  
Director, Bloomberg  
Media Initiative Africa



**Matthew Winkler**  
Editor-in-Chief Emeritus,  
Bloomberg News

# A pre-conference survey of the African situation and sentiment.

Prior to the ABMI20 Innovator Chats, frayintermedia solicited the views of 400 senior journalists and editors across 12 countries on the health of the media industry and the state of journalism in Africa to establish the existential effect of both the ongoing disruption of digital media on legacy media and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Almost half of them believed the health of the traditional media sector deteriorated in 2020 compared to 2019, while a third said there had been no change and 21% felt there had been an improvement.

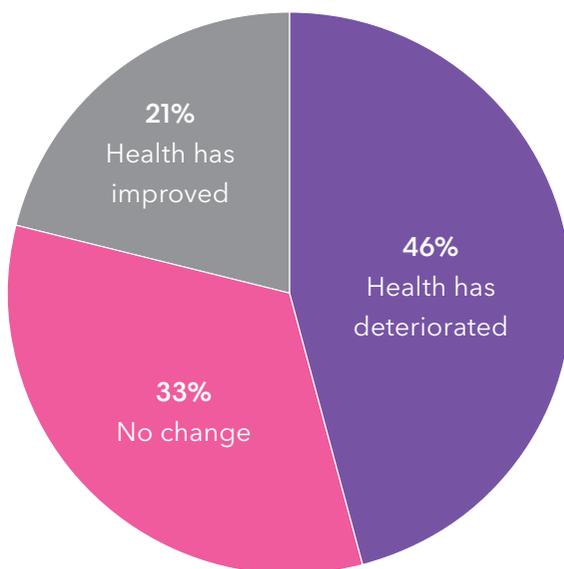
COVID-19 significantly disrupted African media: 74% of respondents reported a decrease in revenues, while 48% reported that working from home had fundamentally affected workflow, collaboration and quality of output.

COVID-19 significantly disrupted African media:

**74%**

of respondents reported a decrease in revenues

How has the health of the traditional media sector fared in 2020 compared to 2019?

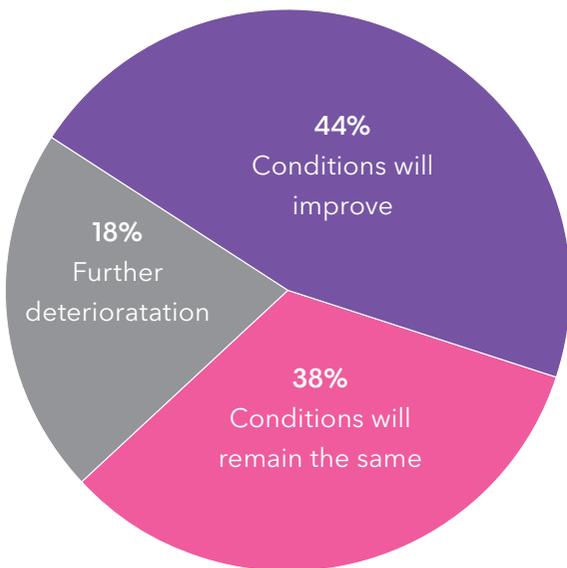


This was exacerbated by unstable internet connectivity, insufficient bandwidth, and, in some cases, government shutdown of the internet. 30% of the sample reported having to retrench staff to cut costs.

Just under half reported an initial growth in digital audiences, as print media circulation declined. The digital growth was not monetizable, and later subsided. New staff were hired too, but at junior levels and in different roles from those who had been retrenched.

Almost half the respondents expect conditions to improve in 2021; 38% believe conditions will remain the same, while 18% believe the situation will deteriorate further. 83% of all respondents believe the number of media outlets in Africa will change post-COVID-19.

### How do you expect conditions to change in 2021?



Social and digital media will have to be closely managed to minimize the disruption of revenues to legacy media outlets; 38% believe social media will have a negative impact, with this rising to 43% when it comes to digital media. Alternative media revenue streams will have to be developed.

# 77%

believe that economic conditions will have far more of an impact on the state and health of journalism on the continent

The respondents believe that economic conditions (77%), media freedom and Artificial Intelligence (49%) will have far more of an impact on the state and health of journalism on the continent rather than demographic changes, political transparency or the regulatory environment. They believe that journalism can be improved through changing business models and increasing collaboration locally, regionally and globally; improving professional standards of journalists, using citizen journalists and reaching out to new audiences, as well as diversifying products.

The respondents believe African media will find its own solutions, operating on a for-profit basis rather than opting for non-profit, donor-funded models. Looking at the next three years, half of them believe the key to grow and scale media organizations will be skilled journalists, followed by new digital offerings and growth in advertising revenue as well as donor funding and private investment. They believe that good journalism and creative income generation are more important than technology-based means of collecting and verifying news. Improving revenue remains far more of a concern to them than cutting costs.

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President, African Development Bank (AfDB)

## Opening Address

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina said the continent had lost a decade of impressive economic growth:

“Africa’s GDP is projected to decline by \$173 to \$236 billion this year. Africa’s economic growth rate is expected to decline by 3.4%. All of this was insignificant compared to the fiscal stimulus packages in the developed world where, for example, Western Europe has spent 30 times the cost of the Marshall Plan.” **President Akinwumi Adesina**



The bank estimates that between 28 and 49 billion people will fall further into extreme poverty with 30 million jobs lost in 2020. Africa will need additional financing of between \$112 and \$154 billion to battle the pandemic.

The AfDB has launched a \$10 billion Crisis Response facility to provide critically needed liquidity, as well as the world’s largest ever-denominated social bond:

a \$3 billion COVID-19 social impact bond for upgrading health facilities, buying essential medicines and PPE, paying healthcare workers and providing social protection for the most vulnerable.

Africa’s outstanding debt, estimated at over \$700 billion, has been compounded by the rise of commercial creditors, who hold over \$44-billion in Eurobond debt for 10 African countries.

The G20 initiative on debt servicing, allowing 22 African countries to access \$5.2 billion in relief on payments, only represented about 4% of the total bilateral debt, he said. Africa cannot accelerate its development by relying on debt. Instead, it has to begin unlocking more than \$1 trillion dollars in pension, sovereign wealth and insurance funds to help close the annual infrastructure-financing gap, which the AfDB estimates to be between \$64 billion to \$108 billion.

Africa has to build back faster by harnessing and better managing its natural resources. Priority has to be placed on quality, not quantity, focusing on sectors better able to create jobs and prioritizing women and youth. The bank will redouble its efforts in renewable energy, including its flagship Sahel solar “desert to power” initiative. It will no longer fund coal projects, turning 40% of its total financing to countering climate change by 2021. It will also scale up its Africa disaster risk insurance financing initiative.

Food security is Africa’s biggest challenge, he said, which is why the bank spent \$378 million in 21 countries in 2020. The bank has also been investing in Africa’s health infrastructure, which has lagged far behind the developed world, forcing the continent to import 90% of its medicine.

The bank has also provided \$4.5 million to fund an African Continental Free Trade Agreement secretariat and support the Africa exchange linkage project to integrate stock exchanges and create a capital market in excess of \$1 trillion – 90% of Africa’s equity market.

COVID-19 has negatively impacted legacy media businesses that needed help to successfully transition to digital, he said, vowing the bank would forge a strong partnership with the ABMI.

“A strong and independent and robust media is an integral part of Africa’s development efforts. The media hold leaders accountable, show transparency and governance; and, help to shape the narrative of what is possible given our tremendous resources.”

**Dr. Akinwumi Adesina,**  
President, African Development Bank



**Matthew Winkler**, Bloomberg News Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief, Emeritus

# Africa Economic Forecast

Africa boasts seven of 2020's top 10 growing economies; Ethiopia, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya, says Matthew Winkler, compared to only three in the last two years and four, five years ago.

	Actual / Forecasts							
Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020f
Bangladesh (YoY%)	6.0	6.1	6.6	7.1	7.3	7.9	8.2	5.0
Ethiopia (YoY%)	9.9	10.3	10.4	8.0	10.2	7.7	9.0	3.0
Vietnam (YoY%)	5.4	6.0	6.7	6.2	6.8	7.1	7.0	3.0
China (YoY%)	7.8	7.4	7.0	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.1	2.1
Uganda (YoY%)	3.9	5.7	6.8	0.4	7.3	6.1	6.7	2.1
Ivory Coast (YoY%)	9.3	8.8	8.8	7.2	7.4	6.8	6.5	2.0
Egypt (YoY%)	3.3	2.9	4.4	4.4	4.1	5.3	5.6	1.9
Ghana (YoY%)	7.2	2.9	2.2	3.5	8.1	6.3	6.1	1.3
Rwanda (YoY%)	4.7	7.3	8.9	6.1	4.0	8.6	10.0	1.3
Kenya (YoY%)	5.9	5.4	5.7	5.9	4.8	6.3	5.6	1.0
Taiwan (YoY%)	2.5	4.7	1.5	2.2	3.3	2.8	2.7	1.0

Africa Has 70% of Top-Growing Economies Source: Bloomberg

The 200 largest Sub-Saharan African companies by market capitalization rewarded investors with a 13% total return, beating the global emerging market average of 12% and the global frontier market, which lost 3%.

	YTD	2 Years	5 Years
<b>200 African Firms</b>	13%	78%	324%
<b>Emerging Market</b>	12%	33%	67%
<b>Frontier Market</b>	-3%	12%	27%

African stocks outperforming the world

Source: Bloomberg

Looking at the last two years, the 200 companies advanced 78% compared to the emerging market's 33% and the frontier market's 12%. Over a five-year period, the African group gained 324% against the emerging market's 67% and the frontier market's 27%.

Nigeria had the best performing companies in 2020 among 93 major equity markets in the world. 153 stocks on the Nigerian exchange beat every single benchmark. The best performing sector was communications at 28% of the index value; five years ago, it was less than 1%.

Name	Wgt	Total Return YTD
<Filter>		
Investable Universe (153)	100.0%	39.18
21) Communications (6)	27.6%	57.29
22) Health Care (11)	0.3%	54.89
23) Materials (14)	30.3%	44.90
24) Financials (52)	23.5%	39.14
25) Utilities (1)	0.2%	14.80
26) Consumer Staples (21)	14.3%	8.32
27) Industrials (19)	0.4%	5.64
28) Technology (4)	0.1%	3.70
29) Consumer Discretionary (11)	0.5%	-0.77
30) Real Estate (3)	0.2%	-10.66
31) Energy (10)	2.6%	-12.10

Communications Lead Nigeria Source: Bloomberg

“Just a few years ago, when we looked at Africa, we were thinking about banks skipping many steps as they moved into digital banking,” he said. Now Bloomberg is seeing something similar with many other businesses that have accelerated growth during the COVID-19 period.

“The remotely engaged economy is something that Africa jumped into largely because it never had the infrastructure of the developed world during the 20th century. And now today, it finds itself in a place that is absolutely critical for developing all kinds of industries that don’t require the traditional 20th-century infrastructures. That means that Africa, even with all its problems, is likely to outperform much of the world in 2021, 2022 and even beyond.”

**Matthew Winkler**, Bloomberg News Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief, Emeritus

Honorable Cina Lawson, Minister of Digital Economy and Digital Transformation, Togo

# Ministerial Conversation



Togo was the first country in West Africa to institute 5G, with major plans to increase internet penetration through partnerships with the private sector to build infrastructure, said Togo's Minister of Digital Economy and Digital Transformation, the Honorable Cina Lawson. Today internet penetration is 65%, up from 13% in 2003.

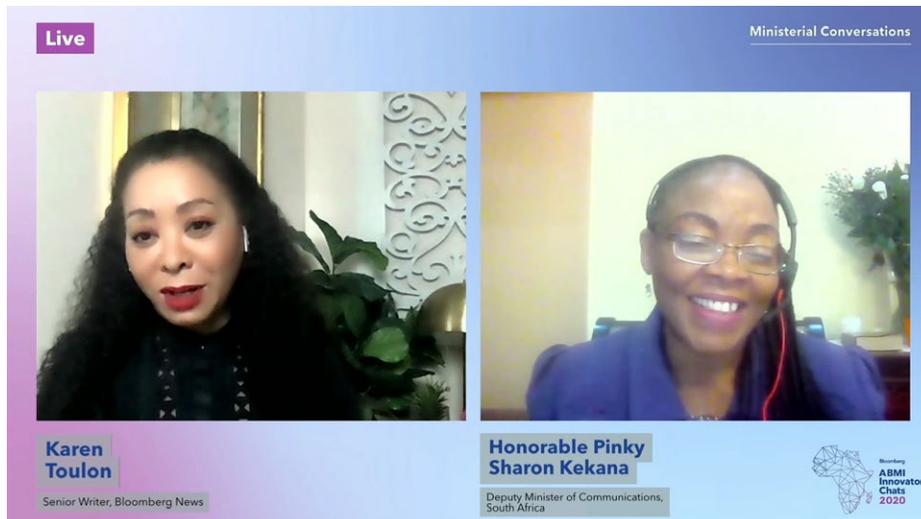
Speaking to Bloomberg Media CEO Justin Smith, Minister Lawson said social media, especially in Africa, is thriving. The downside has been the uptick in fake news,

since much of the content is being produced and uploaded by non-journalists. Due to the extent of the misinformation, Togo President Faure Gnassingbé convened a Cabinet meeting at the start of the COVID-19 crisis. The first concern had been ensuring that accurate information about the pandemic was communicated to the general population as quickly and transparently as possible.

The biggest platform for user-generated content in Togo is not Facebook, but WhatsApp, which distributes text, audio and video in local languages. It is so prevalent that the government used it to distribute its own COVID-19 messaging during the pandemic. Radio remains the dominant media in Togo. Newspapers have been under severe strain because of the pandemic's effect on advertising and circulation and the competition from WhatsApp.

Honorable Pinky Kekana, Deputy Minister of Communications, South Africa

# Ministerial Conversation



COVID-19 has exposed the digital divide in South Africa, spurring the government to resolve the issue of broadband access and the high cost to users, said the country's Deputy Communications Minister, the Honorable Pinky Kekana.

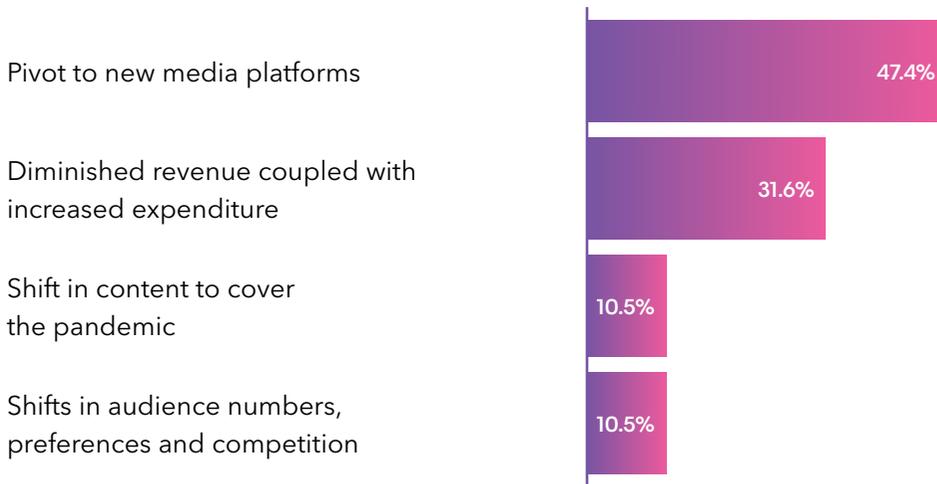
While South Africa has a policy on universal access, there would soon be another on the 4G spectrum release, which would serve to both enhance connectivity and bring down the cost of data, beyond the 1 gig threshold, which has been the focus of the country's competition commission.

The pandemic, Kekana said, had forced media, including the public broadcaster, to drastically rethink their business models and the ways in which they produce content to be able to keep up with an audience and readership whose habits have changed. COVID-19 has also inspired the South African government to exploit opportunities in remote and online learning, leading it to release temporary spectrum to enhance connectivity as an interim measure. It has also reviewed the roll out of fiber optics, choosing instead to create wireless community networks to offset the time and expense involved in laying out fiber networks.

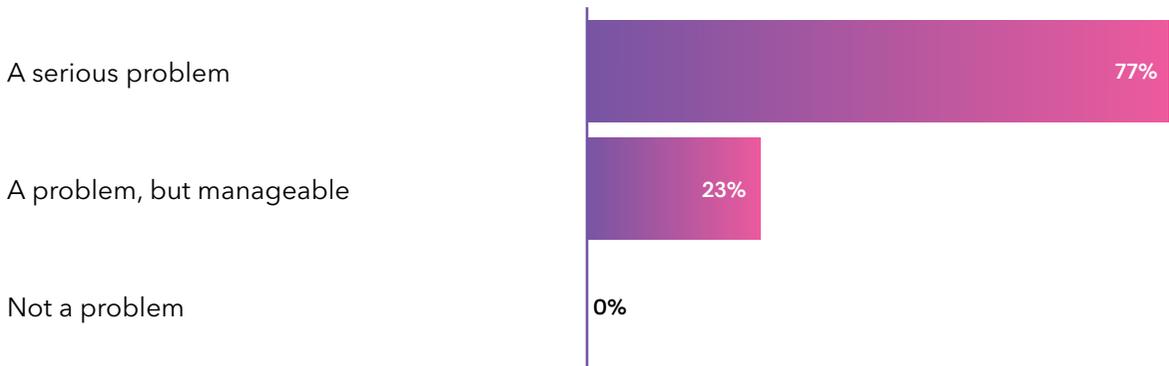
# Online Polling

Every ABMI event incorporates a series of live participant polling sessions to encourage audience engagement and enrich the debate. At ABMI20, six questions were posed during three polling sessions over the two-day event. Below are questions and answers from the first of three live polling sessions.

### Which effect of COVID-19 will have the most significant effect on media in Africa?



### How do you assess the challenges of competing against disinformation on social media?



# The Digital Transformation of New Media and the Rise of Disinformation

Discussing the implications of fake content as the need for factual information becomes increasingly vital, particularly during an international public health crisis.

**Host: Matthew Winkler**, Bloomberg News Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief Emeritus  
**Uzodinma Iweala**, Author and CEO, The Africa Center

**Joel Simon**, Executive Director, Committee to Protect Journalists

**Pamella Sittoni**, Executive Editor, Nation Media Group PLC

**Darren Walker**, President, Ford Foundation



Modern threats against media freedom in the U.S. were not new, said Joel Simon, Executive Director, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ); instead, they dated back to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, long before the committee was formed.

There has been a dramatic worsening of the situation, however, during the Trump era, where we witnessed a systematic effort to undermine the credibility of the media as an institution and undermine, attack, and subvert the work of individual journalists who were critical of his administration. The CPJ recorded 800 individual attacks on U.S. journalists in 2020, ranging from harassment to serious assault.

The biggest concern has been the effect of President Donald Trump's rhetoric internationally, with the way he engaged with the media replicated especially in Africa, said Simon. The Biden administration, he said, has to reformulate the paradigm around press freedom, transparency and access to information both domestically and internationally - and aggressively pursue it.

Freedom is an issue in Africa, said Nation Media Group Executive Editor Pamella Sittoni, citing the arrest of Tanzanian journalists for exposing government cover-ups during the COVID-19 crisis, as well as media constraints

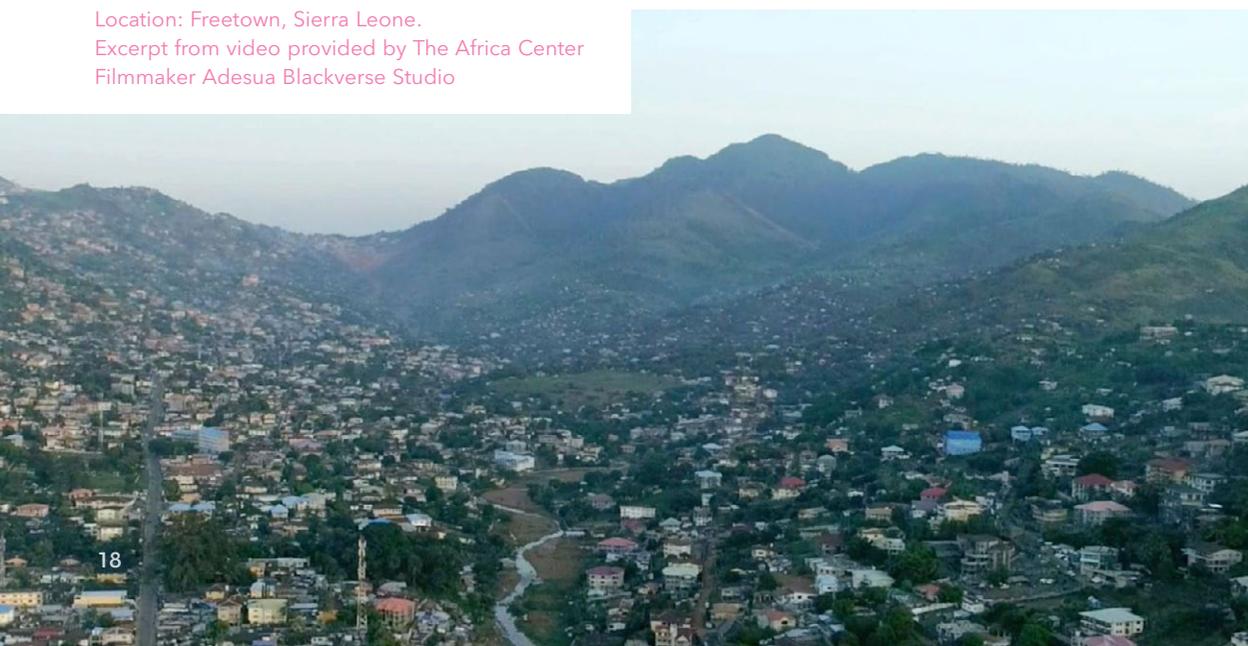
during the recent presidential elections. Kenya's own President Uhuru Kenyatta had been emulating Trump and harassing journalists online, she said.

The media ecosystem also includes social media, said Ford Foundation President Darren Walker, which has contributed to disinformation gripping the entire world.

*"Hate is a money-making endeavor as we have seen in social media, and so we have to address that reality. We have to think about the type of policies we need, the regulations that we need. This is very nuanced and there is not a single solution."*

**Darren Walker**, President, Ford Foundation

Location: Freetown, Sierra Leone.  
Excerpt from video provided by The Africa Center  
Filmmaker Adesua Blackverse Studio



Location: Ethiopia.  
Excerpt from video provided by The Africa Center  
Filmmaker: Chika Okoli, For Africans By Africans



If regulations are not put in place, Walker said, it will be very hard to stem the tide. Uzodinma Iweala, Author and CEO of The Africa Center, cautioned against over-regulating social media, especially given the role it played in Nigeria and the End SARS campaign. There is a need for debate and consensus, rather than the promulgation of regulations that could be used to squeeze out those who do not conform, he said.

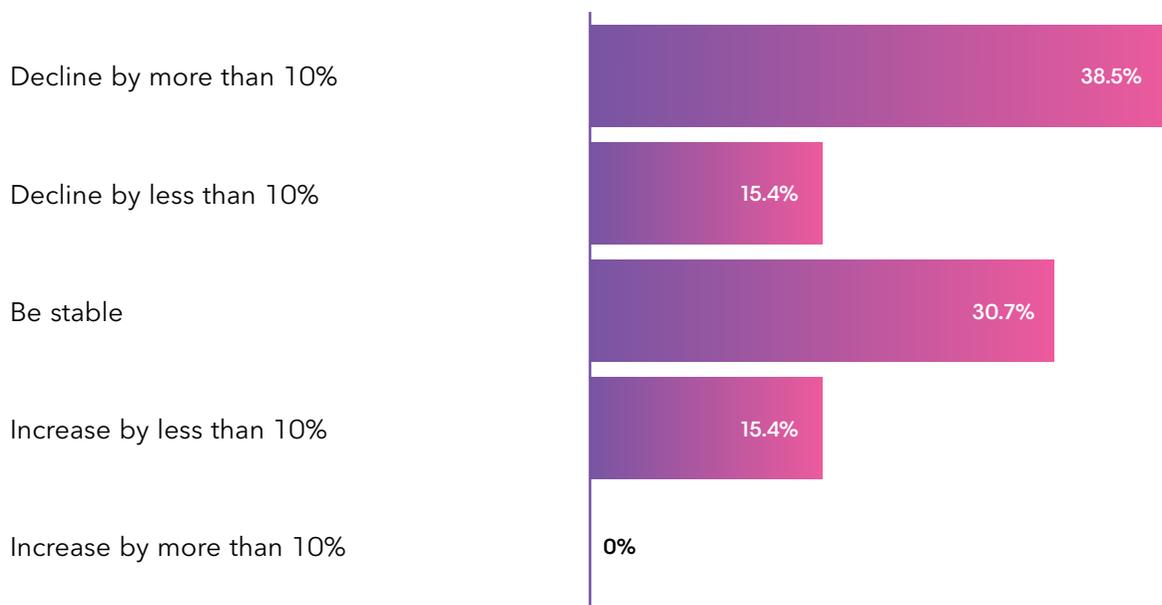
Simon said the troubled global social media environment is the result of the failure of the U.S. political system to address the power of these companies and their negative impact. Sittoni said while legacy media is well regulated, social media is largely unregulated, which the African Union (A.U.) has failed to deal with. Iweala said that the A.U. and similar

organizations should be creating fora to discuss regulations. Still, the problem is that the system has been unregulated for almost 20 years and is a huge cash cow with no incentive for its beneficiaries to change.

Walker said the romanticized version of legacy U.S. media ignored the misinformation that continued to inform some U.S. and European biases about Africa. There also has to be a recognition of the role the race for media profitability has played in spawning misinformation. Iweala said competition is not intrinsically bad; rather, it is the fact that it is unregulated. Simon said regulation should not be left to governments alone, since sometimes those governments do not have the best intentions.

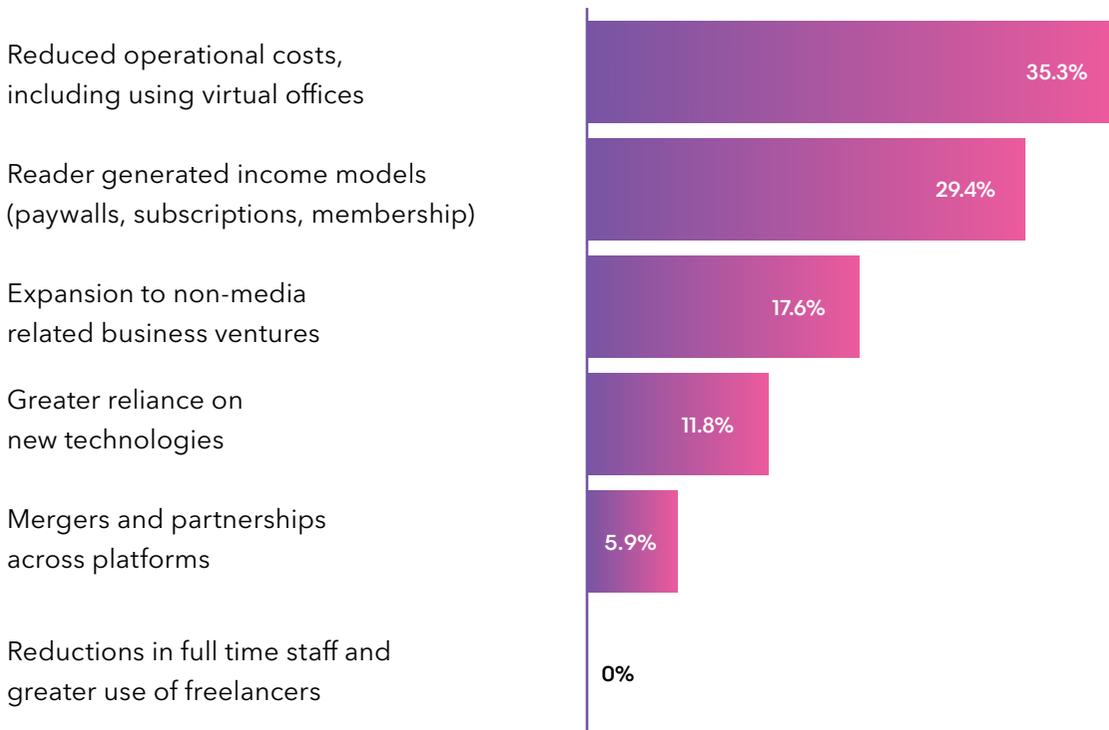
# Online Polling

Comparing 2021 to 2020, media revenue will:



# Online Polling

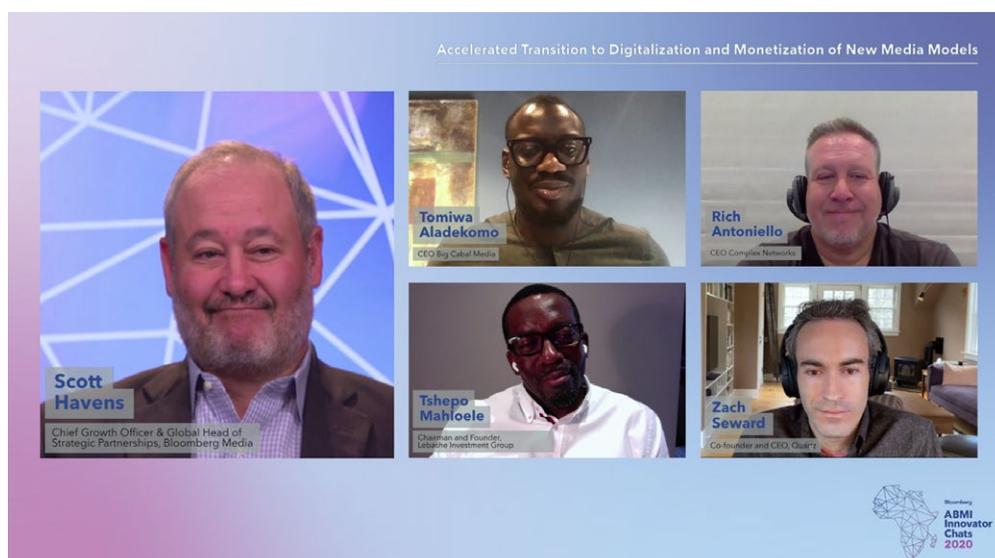
Post COVID-19, what business strategies are likely to strengthen media organizations?



# Accelerated Transition to Digitalization and Monetization of New Media Models

Examining the rapid changes in media and the implication for revenue generation and long term viability.

**Host: Scott Havens**, Chief Growth Officer and Global Head of Strategic Partnerships, Bloomberg Media  
**Rich Antoniello**, CEO, Complex Networks  
**Tomiwa Aladekomo**, CEO, Big Cabal Media  
**Zack Seward**, Co-founder and CEO, Quartz Africa  
**Tshepo Mahloele**, Chairman and Founder, Lebashe Investment Group



Big Cabal Media in Nigeria produces two publications; one on technology and the other on youth. Complex Networks is a U.S. media and entertainment company focusing on the youth market. Quartz is a global business news organization serving younger business professionals.

Lebashe Investment Group bought Tiso Blackstar in 2019 with its portfolio of legacy newspapers across South Africa, a T.V. production and film import business, as well as an events company.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Quartz immediately saw a halt in advertising, said Seward, forcing them to start laying off staff, which prepared them for the second half of the year. Now the company is hiring again, subscriptions have increased, but advertising remains volatile. In Nigeria, Aladekomo had to contend with a pandemic and political unrest.

Advertising has begun to pick up again, and the growth in audience inspired by the lockdown has continued after the lockdown eased. The biggest changes however, have been the pivoting of events companies to virtual and the loss of expected revenue from big editorial special projects.

Faced with canceling Complex Con, where 75,000 people paid \$150 to attend and where \$20-million to \$25-million in top line merchandise and food would have been sold over the weekend, Antonello and his team created Complex Land, their own video game, which debuted in December 2020. The company not only recouped the money it would have lost, it increased revenue by 25%. It intends to hold this event multiple times in 2021 and replicate this kind of offering across other verticals. In South Africa, Mahloe said Lebashe's financial strength allowed its media interests to properly exploit opportunities, not just locally but throughout Africa.

"All (our) different businesses tend to cover the whole spectrum of the South African populace. The whole plan is to see how we can make the media business align with some of our financial services' ambitions, and some of the other partnerships we want to bring to them and also take that across the African continent," Antonello said.

Complex Networks pivoted to video at the end of 2015. It now has a massive YouTube video business that does not just generate advertising support but has also developed a number of spin-off programs and products, including its own range of "hot sauces" to accompany the show it developed using that title. Aladekomo used a similar template behind the inaugural Jollof Road Trip project, a road trip through 14 African countries in 2019, which his youth publication Zikoko created, paid for by sponsors. His company is now looking to license the intellectual property, sell the content to a streaming platform and explore merchandising spin-offs.

Seward said 2020 had been emotionally challenging, but the transition to working remotely has been smooth and probably permanent. In Nigeria, Aladekomo said staff will return to the office, on a rotating basis, mostly for strategy sessions and video production. Antonello said COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to benefit both staff and companies: "We're going to stay very flexible and be open-minded about this to create the optimization of innovation, but also the optimization of quality of life."

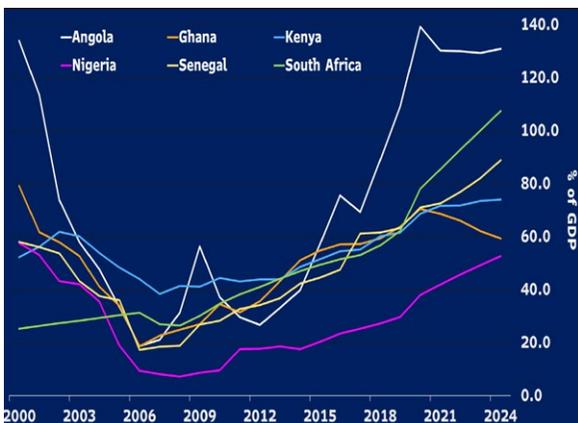
# Economic Overview on the Impact of COVID-19 in Africa



A significant aspect about the coronavirus pandemic in Africa has been the delay in its onset and the relatively low incidence of cases, said Bloomberg News Africa Economist Boingotlo Gasealahwe. While the numbers might be under-reported, the effect on the regional economies has been on a par, if not worse, than in the rest of the world, with Sub-Saharan Africa set to face its worst contraction on record this year.

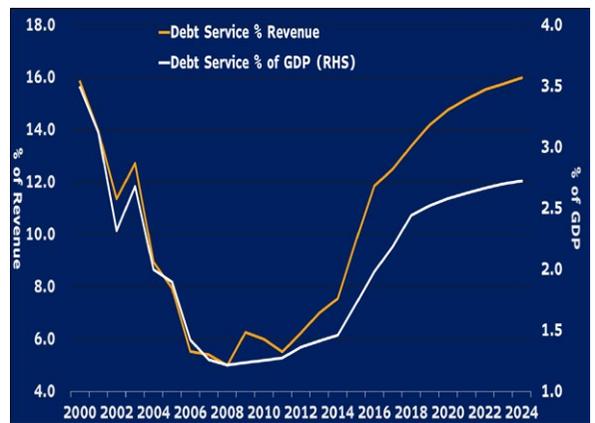
The most affected sectors are those dependent on tourism and commodities. Many countries have started to rebound, but the recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels is only expected to occur from 2021 into 2022, with the region's biggest economies, Nigeria and South Africa only returning by 2023. Sub-Saharan economies have been

disproportionately affected because they were wholly unprepared for a pandemic of this magnitude in terms of laboratory capacity, hospital beds and physicians, as well as several countries already in debt distress. An even higher number of countries had very high debt to GDP ratios and widening budget differences, she said.



Increasing debt and social vulnerabilities

Source: Bloomberg



Increasing debt and social vulnerabilities

Source: Bloomberg

The main coronavirus response has been a debt service suspension initiative, now extended until the end of 2021. This freed up resources, but the magnitude of this change did not correlate with the relief required.

The biggest beneficiary has been Angola because it owes the most. Less well-off countries will have a slower and shallower recovery with the attendant threat to social spending, as critical funds are diverted to servicing debt. The risk is that the region could plunge into a debt crisis similar to the early 2000s.

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement could substantially stimulate inter-regional trade boosting the recovery in tandem with the development of a COVID-19 vaccine and the implementation of economic reforms.

Everything depends on the evolution of the pandemic as well as regional political and security risks and market developments.

# CEO Media Roundtable

Discussing how their organizations have managed with the pandemic.

**Host:** Justin Smith, CEO, Bloomberg Media  
**Dr. Edith Dankwa**, CEO, Business and Financial Times  
**Almar Latour**, CEO, Dow Jones and Company  
**Styli Charalambous**, Publisher and CEO, Daily Maverick



Dankwa was recently appointed chair of the Business and Financial Times Limited holding company after serving as CEO. The newspaper is the leading daily business newspaper in Ghana. The company also publishes a raft of magazines covering topics from business to science, hosts an online platform and owns an events company. Latour was recently appointed CEO of Dow Jones Company, which publishes the Wall Street Journal and a range of B2B publications. The company also has the Dow Jones news wire and a premium business search engine called Fact T.V. The company has four million members (subscribers) and

reaches 100-million users across the world. It was also one of the first global adopters of the paywall strategy on the internet. Charalambous is the CEO and publisher of the Daily Maverick, an 11-year-old South African start-up published digitally that recently launched a weekly print edition.

Smith asked the CEOs how they saw their organizations achieving long-term business stability beyond the pandemic. Latour said it was about building unique value that was sustainable and profitable.

“I am incredibly optimistic about where we are going as a company at Dow Jones and the Wall Street Journal. But also, I am optimistic about where we will land as a news industry because people will realize that value more than ever before.”

**Almar Letour**, CEO, Dow Jones and Company

Dankwa said her company had begun a process to migrate readers to digital platforms almost five years ago, but many had refused to change, wanting the hard copy version of the newspaper - especially now in the midst of the pandemic. Subscriptions, both digital and print, are key for the Business and Financial Times, but another lucrative revenue stream has been events and training, drawing on the strength of the parent brand and the business information it generates whether this is packaged within the newspaper, the website, events, or research papers it commissions.

At the Daily Maverick, the membership forum now contributes a third of the revenue - even after the organization doubled in size. Paywalls have not been an option given South Africa's high unemployment because they would reduce the impact of having mass readership of critically important long-form investigative journalism and analysis, said Charalambous.

Given that the monoliths of Google and Facebook now account for 50% of all digital advertising in the U.S., what are the prospects for other digital news publishers Smith asked.

Digital advertising is performing very strongly, said Latour, because of the community of readers that the Wall Street Journal has created. Smith said Bloomberg too had seen a significant bounce back. Latour believed this trend would continue because most companies now needed a digital path to their consumers.

In Ghana, advertising had begun to pick up after the lockdown, said Dankwa, but there was no doubt that the shift to online had escalated. It was critical that media companies identify their niche and ensure that their content is credible, relevant and high quality. In South Africa, where the sector had been stagnating, print advertising was down 65% for the year, while cinema advertising was dying, said Charalambous. Digital advertising was only down 3%.

“I think we are seeing a sort of bounce back into digital because many more businesses are becoming e-commerce incentivized.”

**Styli Charalambous**,  
Publisher and CEO, Daily Maverick

Location: Cape Town, South Africa.  
Excerpt from videos provided by The Africa Center



# Innovative Partnerships and Revenue Generation

Discussing successful partnerships, new sources of financing and trends.

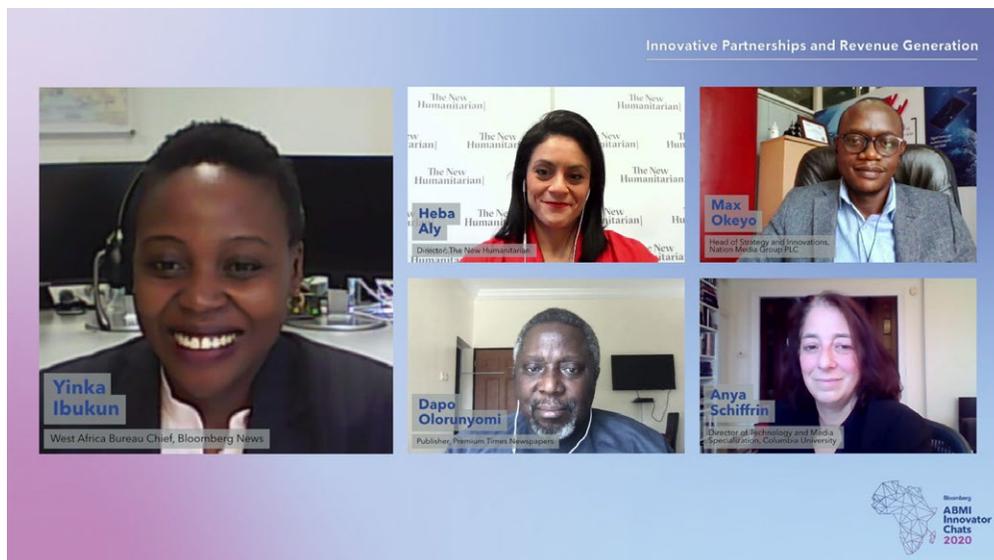
**Host:** **Yinka Ibukun**, West Africa Bureau Chief, Bloomberg News

**Heba Aly**, Director, The New Humanitarian

**Max Okeyo**, Head of Strategy and Innovation, Nation Media Group PLC

**Dapo Olorunyomi**, Publisher, Premium Times Newspapers

**Anya Schiffrin**, Director of Technology, Media, & Communications Specialization, Columbia University



Why did some media companies survive and others struggle? asked Bloomberg West Africa Bureau Chief Yinka Ibukun to her panel of experts.

For Anya Schiffrin, the differentiator was quality information and journalism. "This has been a terrible period for journalism, some people are calling it a media extinction event," she said. Some outlets have been collapsing, but there has been an upsurge of interest in outlets like the BBC, the New York Times and the Guardian, she said. Quality journalists, especially in non-profits, have found very

creative ways to make money; holding events, selling memberships and sourcing grants.

Heba Aly agreed. "We have come out of COVID-19 stronger than we went into it. I think the non-profit model actually shields media, because we aren't dependent on advertising." Like most non-profits, having a decentralized newsroom with everyone either working remotely or from home, as well as being very agile by definition, also helped the New Humanitarian weather the disruption of COVID-19. The critical issue has remained having a close relationship with readers.

“Suddenly everyone has recognized how important it is to have reliable information in a crisis, particularly in an age in which we’re seeing so much misinformation that can actually cost people their lives if they get the wrong information.”

**Heba Aly**, Director, The New Humanitarian

The New Humanitarian is funded by a mix of governments and foundations, as well as a recently launched membership program. It is also experimenting with other revenue sources such as speaker fees, event sponsorship and individual giving.

In Kenya, the Nation Media Group forged a partnership with telecom company Safaricom, said Max Okeyo, its Head of Strategy and Innovation, to leverage the telecom’s 15 million active subscribers. This requires creating niche content, accessible from a mobile device. The Nation Media Group has also begun creating native advertising content for clients to add value beyond the traditional newspaper, radio or T.V. advertising. A third innovation has been to create video and podcasts to attract a much younger audience, which is also dependent on partnering with telecoms to reduce the cost of data to access this content.

In West Africa, the lockdown continued the disruption for legacy media that began with last year’s collapse of commodity prices, said Dapo Olorunyomi, the Publisher of Premium Times Newspapers. Premium Times adopted a hybrid revenue model, including launching

a membership program and looking to philanthropy to fund solutions-based journalism and investigative journalism projects.

The Nigerian government has also reached out to support media by offering an 8% interest loan, inspired, said Olorunyomi, by the Côte d’Ivoire model. Schiffrin said this was a timely intervention, despite the post-colonial history of African governments and media. “There are lots and lots of ways to support journalism without imposing the will of the government or censorship,” she said. She is worried, however, about the impact of local content on editorial integrity and the potential of video and podcasts to cost more than they would make.

Native advertising is a big challenge, conceded Olorunyomi, but ultimately it comes down to sustainability. Okeyo said consumers are becoming more discerning, while advertisers want more value.

Olorunyomi said the answer lays in the model that a media outlet chose: an advertisement free subscriber environment or free access paid by the advertiser.

There has been a massive rise in non-profit journalism in the U.S., investigating the criminal justice and education systems, but the difficulty, Schiffrin said, has been to find international funders willing to support journalism for African audiences. This is changing though.

Podcasting, she said, would trump video because of its portability, its intimacy and conversational format. Video instead lends itself more to Facebook. Schiffrin said media companies have to stand together and get a fair share of the revenue from platforms like Google and Facebook.

# Media Management, Data Privacy and Security

Discussing new approaches to media management post COVID-19 to ensure companies are equipped to handle data privacy and security.

**Host: Paula Fray**, CEO, frayintermedia

**Samuel Attah-Mensah**, Managing Director, Omni Media Ltd

**Teresa Clarke**, Chairman and CEO, Africa.com

**Koketso Moeti**, Executive Director, amandla.mobi



Paula Fray said while there had been a spate of cyber breaches at major institutions in 2020, the broader issue is online privacy and the security of personal data. Koketso Moeti, Executive Director of amandla.mobi and founding member of the African Digital Rights Network, said data privacy is about protecting individuals from what the data could reveal about them, whether captured on a mobile phone, the internet or even a health-tracking device.

The African Union began moving on the issue of privacy in 2010, she said. Subsequently SADC, ECOWAS and the EAC all passed conventions, but these have not been adequately enforced and legislation in individual countries has been insufficient. Even so, there had been considerable steps in the right direction of people holding companies and the state accountable.

Samuel Attah-Mensah, the managing director of Omni Media in Ghana, said data protection remained low as a national priority. The current low degree of protection for rights generally extends to copyright and intellectual property as well.

Teresa Clarke, Chair and CEO of Africa.com, said media consolidation globally for commercial survival has rendered issues like data protection slightly less urgent because (digital media) represents a small part of the total media pie, especially in a fragmented market like Africa. Trust in media has been eroded, especially when it comes to data protection, exacerbated by the growing popularity of social media platforms like Facebook in Africa.

“Facebook is used in more creative ways across the continent of Africa than it may be in other places, with people using it as a storefront more than they would in the western world. And because of that, it means there’s more information being collected about you. And lastly, the regulators have been slow to catch up to the digital industry.”

**Teresa Clarke**, Chairman and CEO, Africa.com

Privacy risks are the same wherever they occur: exposure to lenders exploiting habit data and extracting usurious rates or authorities harvesting cookie data from browsing history for digital surveillance. The difference though is in the lack of protection, especially for consumers.

In South Africa, Moeti said, some private institutions control access via biometric controls, once again including the person’s I.D. number. In Ghana, there is a growing awareness about the need for data protection following the government’s test publication of voters’ personal information ahead of the December elections. The public backlash forced the government to withdraw the information and only republish with far stricter access controls, Attah-Mensah said.

“In the last decade,” said Clarke, “the duopoly of Facebook and Google have cornered the ad market. As a result, the media in Africa, like those around the world, are pressed for revenue and user data becomes something that is a monetizable asset that they can use to increase revenue. The more information you have on your users, the more you can earn in advertising revenue, allowing the advertisers to be more specific, to target more narrowly.”

The expense of bandwidth is often offset by consumers willingly providing their details to get free access. It might present itself as a first-world issue when consumers in Africa have far more pressing concerns like food security, health and shelter, but it affects everyone, she said. For Moeti, the problem of data protection and privacy is that it always places the responsibility on the individual, when it is actually a systemic issue.

# The Future of Streaming Services, Live Events and Ad Revenue

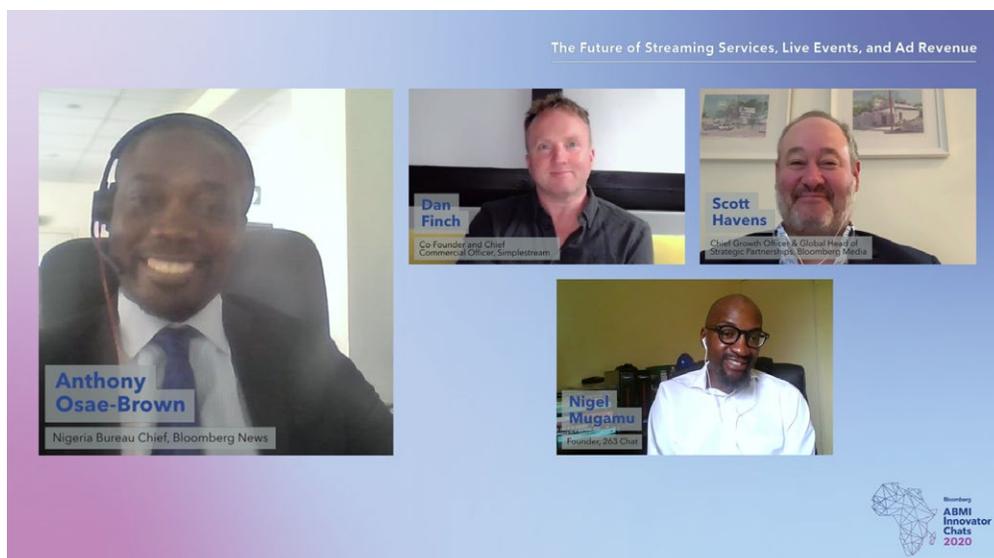
Discussing the short and long-term impact of COVID-19 on streaming and live events, including sporting events, lessons learned, and its implications for the future.

**Host: Anthony Osae-Brown**, Nigeria Bureau Chief, Bloomberg News

**Dan Finch**, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, Simplestream

**Nigel Mugamu**, Founder, 263 Chat

**Scott Havens**, Chief Growth Officer and Global Head of Strategic Partnerships, Bloomberg Media



Africa is a huge market for live events, and now streaming, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic, which shut everything down, said Dan Finch, Co-founder and Chief Commercial Officer of Simplestream, who has been working on the continent for the last five years.

For 263 Chat Founder Nigel Mugamu, the demand for news from Zimbabwe spiked during the lockdown, especially among the Zimbabwean diaspora in the U.K., US, Canada and South Africa. The eight-year-old

platform is digital only, but produces an e-newspaper distributed across WhatsApp.

Bloomberg Media will finish slightly down on budget but almost as high as last year, said Scott Havens, because of the surge in digital advertising in the second half of the year. Traffic during the early months of the pandemic was double the normal volume as people flocked to Bloomberg as their news source, with 10-15% remaining after the initial elevated engagement. Havens said there had been a significant rise in digital audio



Location: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.  
Excerpt from video provided by The Africa Center  
Filmmaker: Chika Okoli, For Africans By Africans (FABA)

engagement, especially podcasts, because people have more time since they were not commuting as much.

For Finch, whose company delivers content via the internet, there has been a definite change in people's viewing behavior, accompanied by an uptake in advertising, because now advertisers are receiving granular detail about who their audiences are, allowing targeted advertising.

Havens said media survival had traditionally rested on having multiple media categories, creating power and scale. The success of niche publishing has hinged on creating a highly engaged audience, scaling it as far as possible to create a community that could sustain a live events business.

The COVID-19 crisis forced Mugamu and his team to harness technologies like Zoom and even use SMSs to keep in touch with audiences and bring them to advertisers. Access to the internet in a continent with high bandwidth prices is a problem said Finch, which is why his company included 'download to device' in all their services. There are huge opportunities in this area, especially in terms of education, where children cannot get to school for whatever

reason, as well as for governments to get behind initiatives with mobile operators and zero rate some of the data.

*"With a young demographic in Africa, an average age of about 19, with 1.3 billion people as your market, the future is hugely exciting. Africa will be the tipping point of this adoption of mobile to be the main primary viewing experience."*

**Dan Finch**, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, Simplestream

Havens said live events would return strongly by 2022, with the money spent on traditional television shifting inexorably to streaming services along with a move towards paywalls and subscriptions for streaming and for access to journalism and news. This would not be the end of traditional media platforms just yet, because there was still a demand in certain demographics.

# Beyond the Pandemic: African Media of the Future

## How is Africa Covered in the Media?

“Until the lions tell the story, the story of the hunt will always be told by the hunters.” It is an old African adage which Moky Makura, the Executive Director of Africa No Filter, proved during a wide-ranging survey of African media in 2020.

“What the world believes about Africa is actually what Africa believes about itself.”

**Moky Makura**, Executive Director,  
Africa No Filter

“The key frames to the story, things that we often see about the continent: poverty, poor leadership, corruption, conflict, disease, lead to narratives about the continent being broken, dependent and lacking agency,” Makura explained.

The implications for investment, migration, creativity and innovation are immense. Researchers contacted 38 editors in 15 countries, analyzed content from 60 media outlets across 15 countries between September and October and held five focus groups with 25 African editors. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the media outlets did not have correspondents in other African countries but relied on foreign news services. A third of all coverage on Africa was from non-African sources, with AFP and BBC



accounting for 25%. Many stories were verbatim press releases.

Of the 309 articles analyzed over the three weeks, 81% were hard news, with 26% on politics covering the elections in Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Egypt and Seychelles. The other stories were about conflict (13%), particularly in Nigeria. The balance of the hard news (13%) was about economics, trade and business, but the voices quoted, albeit experts, were all foreign. Stories lacked context and where they were about violence, the voices were of those in power with little attention given to alternate voices, particularly the opposition. There was very little human-interest journalism.

There is good news in Africa, said Makura, but more work needs to be done to grow awareness and make newsrooms aware of how they are helping to foster stereotypes about Africa and, concomitantly, a great opportunity to invest in African journalism, especially training and storytelling.

# African Media of the Future: Our Stories Our Voices:

**Host:** Professor Dugan Fraser, Director, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results

**Paul McNally**, Co-Founder, Volume

**Nanjaya Nyabola**, Author and Host, Executive Producer, Things Fall Apart Podcast series

**Bilal Randeree**, Program Director for Africa and MENA, Media Development Investment Fund

Just how is the media responding to COVID-19 in a rapidly changing landscape? This was the question posed by Professor Dugan Fraser to his panelists.

Lockdown forced Nyabola to pivot to podcasts, which had become the only forum for conversations in an era of no book festivals because of the need for social distancing. Volume Africa began producing podcasts for the NGO sector to distribute over WhatsApp to communicate with stakeholders when they could no longer meet face-to-face, said McNally. COVID-19, said Randeree, had provided opportunities for start-ups particularly to exploit as advertising budgets shrank, rendering bigger, legacy media organizations less viable propositions for advertisers.

Nyabola has been looking to collaborate with local community radio stations to create a Pan African footprint for her podcast series using crowdfunding as the best model to ensure editorial independence and integrity.

While many people are loath to pay for subscriptions, Nyabola believed people would support initiatives that they would benefit from and in which they saw value. McNally is using the same principle to build Volume Africa's membership program. Part of that process may include creating workshops to empower members to make their own podcasts, which can then be



hosted on the site. The idea, he says, is to take the model back to front, building the audience first and then focus on monetizing that.

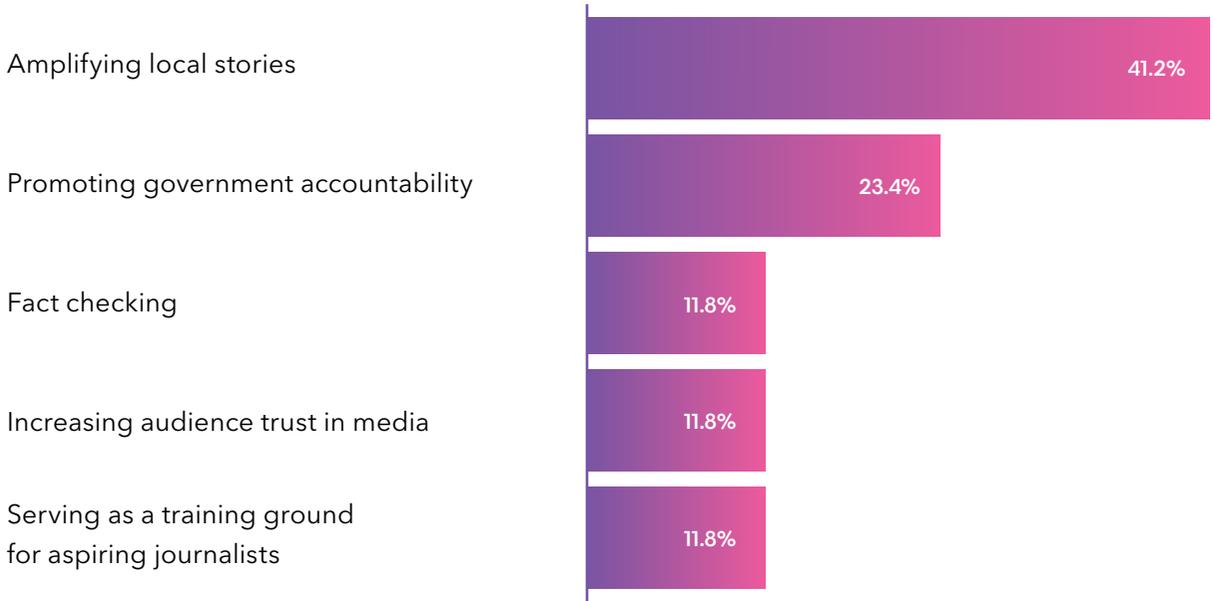
For Randeree, it is critical too that media organizations do not see themselves as either commercial or grant dependent, but rather view grants as part of the revenue/income mix.

*“Have your pipeline, have your strategy, go for the easy money. There’s no one silver bullet, there’s no one tap that you’re going to open to solve all your problems.”*

**Bilal Randeree**, Program Director for Africa and MENA, Media Development Investment Fund

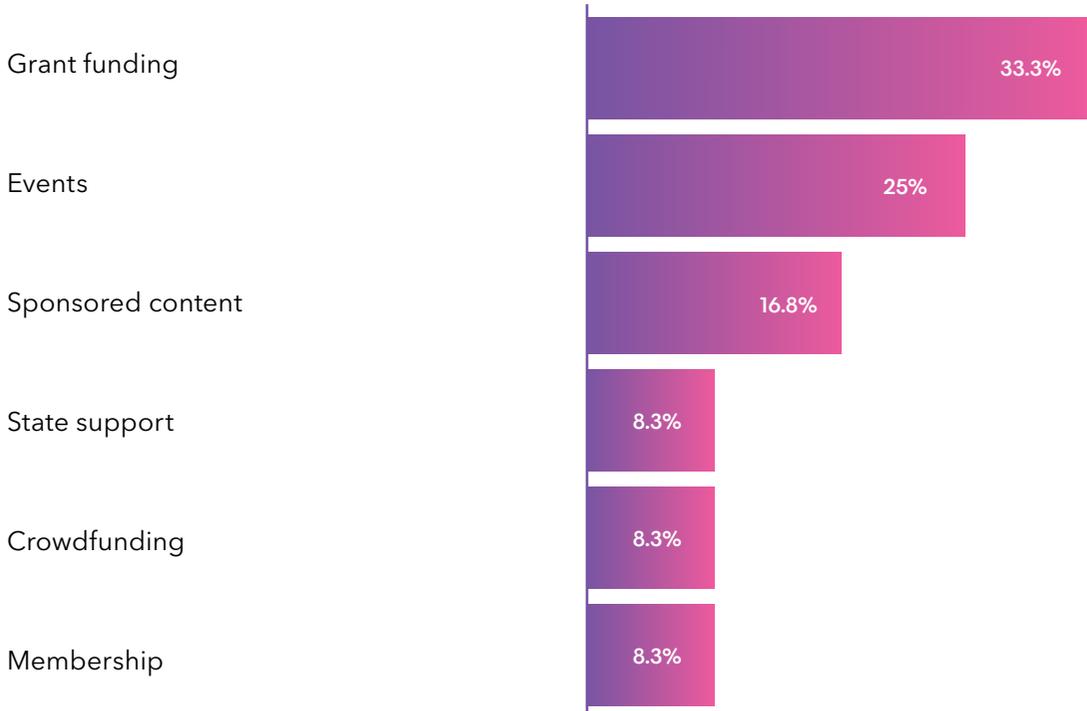
# Online Polling

In the future, community media will provide the most important contributions to:



# Online Polling

Which of the following revenue models are strong sources of income for Africa's community media?



# Closing Remarks

The ABMI program, said **Justin Smith**, is a crucially important project for Bloomberg Media and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

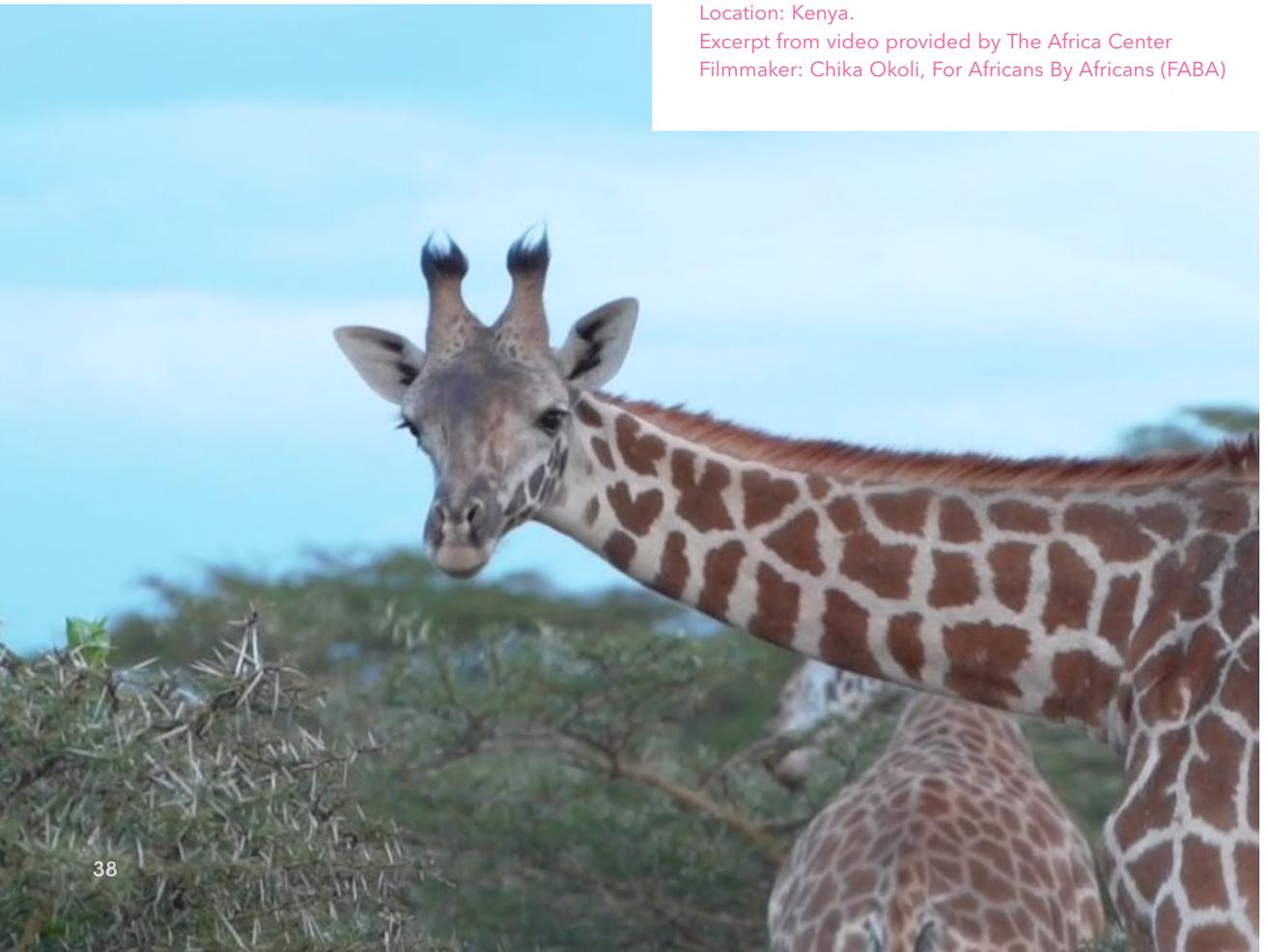
“The opportunity to bring us all together, to have conversations at this level of sophistication and to learn from each other, is really, really important.”

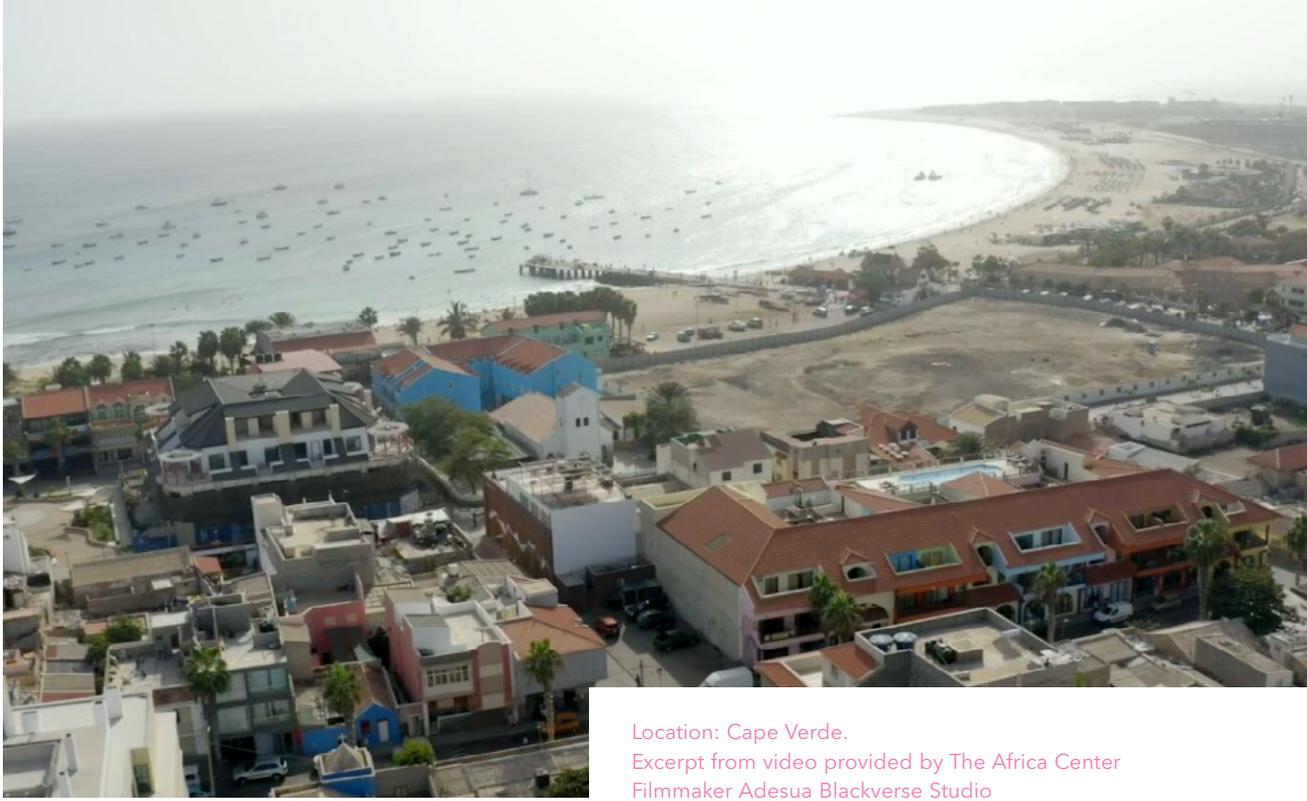
BMIA Director **Erana Stennett** said shared ideas and experiences help ensure a thriving free press that will bolster democracies, sustain economies and let the greatest number of people live longer, better lives, as Mike Bloomberg envisaged in setting up his Foundation. Next year, we hope ABMI 2021 will again be an in-person event in Africa.

Location: Kenya.

Excerpt from video provided by The Africa Center

Filmmaker: Chika Okoli, For Africans By Africans (FABA)





Location: Cape Verde.  
Excerpt from video provided by The Africa Center  
Filmmaker Adesua Blackverse Studio

## About Bloomberg Africa Business Media Innovators 2020

Africa Business Media Innovators 2020 is a program of the Bloomberg Media Initiative Africa to advance business journalism, build media capacity, convene international leaders and improve access to data in order to advance transparency, accountability and governance on the continent.

## Acknowledgments

We thank everyone who has made this program possible.

Special thanks to Bloomberg Philanthropies, Bloomberg LP, The Africa Center, African Film Festival, Frayintermedia, Portland Communications, Stagestruck, FourTwo Creative, For Africans By Africans and Adesua Blackverse Studios.

We also want to acknowledge the support provided by the Synergos Institute.

Recorded Performance by Asa, Lagos Nigeria;  
filmed by Janet Nwose & FourTwo Creative.

Live Performance Eli Fola.



Underwritten by:

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**