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HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

What We Can Learn from Black Youth's Responses to COVID-19

Report by:
Niousha Roshani & Nyeleti Honwana
Co-Founders of Global Black Youth

SUMMARY

Young Black people from the Global South have designed new spaces for their ideas to flourish. They have contested and claimed digital spaces, created and developed digital economies and led important scientific and health innovations in recent years. In particular, innovation and entrepreneurship have been central to Black communities' (people of African descent) response to the spread of COVID-19.

New technologies and ventures are working to strengthen the socio-economic position of African-descendants. From 3D printers created in Brazil's favelas to banking apps in Nigeria to a flourishing digital economy ecosystem in Rwanda, young Black people are not sitting on the sidelines of the COVID-19 response; they are leading it. Their innovations are being used to curtail the spread of the pandemic around the world and especially in places like Brazil, Colombia, the US and the UK, where the virus has disproportionately affected Black and minority populations.

In the US and across Europe, studies have shown that Black and minority populations have borne the brunt of COVID-19 infections and deaths. In the UK, Black people are 71% more likely to die COVID-related deaths than white Britons. And in the US, Black Americans are dying at "three times the rate of white people." While in Latin America, communities of African descent are becoming infected and dying at faster rates than their non-black counterparts. Colombia's Pacific coast which has the highest concentration of African-descendant citizens, is also home to the highest rates of COVID-19 infections. Similarly, Brazil and Colombia have the highest rates of Afro-descendants outside of the African continent; these communities have similarly borne the greatest impact of the virus. In Brazil, where more than half the population identifies as Black or Afro-Brazilian, Black communities are being infected and killed by COVID at almost twice the rate of white Brazilians. Black populations in Latin America have been historically and structurally marginalized and underserved.

On the African continent the spread has been comparatively slower than other parts of the world. However, the usual tropes of 'doom and gloom' seem to accompany the way that Africa is discussed when it comes to COVID-19; see for instance: "Virus exposes gaping holes in Africa's health systems" (Reuters). However, the opposite is true. In Africa and across the Black diaspora, young Black people have and continue to innovate in order to answer the challenges of their communities, societies and regions. COVID-19 has put these initiatives into high gear as young people move beyond the incongruent and often misplaced mitigation efforts in their countries to offer innovative, creative solutions to countering misinformation, hindering the spread of the disease and strengthening economic resilience to its long-term impacts. It is time that we look to Black youth as the knowledge producers they are, and center them, their work and experience in formulating appropriate, sustainable responses to the pandemic.

However, dominant negative narratives of young Black people as apathetic, criminal or a problem to be solved, still persist. **Global systemic racism, marginalization and criminalization have and continue to endanger Black lives and hinder their ability to effect the change they are working for.** These narratives have led to the decimation of Black people's human and civil rights and, at their worst, the loss of their lives.

We are in a moment in which Black youth are demanding change, not only in the United States, but across Africa, Latin America, Europe and beyond. Movements for justice have been on-going for years in countries and communities around the world: #FeesMustFall in South Africa; Y'en a Marre in Senegal; #BlackLivesMatter in the US and beyond; No Mas Soldado Micolta in Colombia; #MariellePresente in Brazil; and #KotKòbPetroKaribeA in Haiti are all examples of youth demanding greater space in their societies to control and shape their own destinies. During the pandemic, the more recent deaths of unarmed Black people in the US have sparked a rejection of racist police behavior and prompted global solidarity between Black people who see their challenges reflected in their American counterparts' struggle.

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This connectivity and solidarity has underpinned Global Black Youth's (GBY) work since its inception. GBY convenes and supports the most innovative, entrepreneurial and disruptive young Black people around the world. GBY fundamentally understands Black youth as an untapped resource with valuable and otherwise unattainable knowledge of and solutions to the most pressing issues we face today. As the world continues to grapple with the impacts of COVID-19, examples of the work that young Black people are doing in a number of sectors reinforces the need to amplify their efforts and connect them to greater resources.

Throughout the month of May 2020, GBY partnered with the Portulans Institute and civil society organizations to hold a three-part webinar series: 'Black Communities Respond to COVID-19.' Our weekly discussions focused on knowledge produced in the Global South and included innovators, disruptors and entrepreneurs from Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Mozambique, Rwanda, Brazil and Colombia. Our audiences reached a large cohort of young people and represented an even wider array of countries, ethnic and racial backgrounds.

The **'Black Communities Respond to COVID-19' webinar series'** highlighted how youth are organizing and combating the impacts of the Coronavirus in three main ways. The series examined: Technology: Tackling Misinformation and Digital Rights in the time of COVID-19 ; Innovation: Healthcare and Science - Innovative Solutions to COVID-19, and Entrepreneurship: Mitigating the Economic Impact of COVID-19. Below we highlight some of the major innovations coming from Black communities in each of these areas and summarize the key takeaways from our discussion series.

TECHNOLOGY

Tackling Misinformation and Digital Rights in the time of COVID-19

Along with the spread of the COVID-19, came the spread of misinformation. This rampant 'infodemic' greatly weakened mitigation efforts and threatened effective interventions. It was imperative that we began by discussing the various methods to combat the spread of COVID-19 disinformation and misinformation while preserving digital rights on the African continent and in the Diaspora. The first webinar featured Hlengiwe Dube, Expression, Information and Digital Rights Project Manager at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria; Nelson Kwaje, Director of #DefyHateNow, South Sudan; and Rogerio Siqueira, journalist and Ambassador for the Pan-African Council, Brazil Chapter.

One of the first obstacles to accurate information sharing is access to the Internet. Internet penetration varies across the African continent and even within countries. As Hlengiwe explained, Kenya (see Portulans's NRI data and country analysis) boasts connectivity rates among the highest on the continent with 87.2% able to access the internet, while only half of South Africa's population (see Portulans's NRI data and country analysis) is online, which remains a stark contrast to the 1% connectivity in Eritrea. In Latin America, Brazil has the largest number of internet users in the region with a 74% internet penetration rate. However, access is largely limited to connection on social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, made available in data packages for low-income populations (see Portulans' NRI data and country analysis).

Our panelists stressed that inequality in Internet access was evident in Black communities around the world. Urban centers have much higher internet penetration than rural regions. Rogerio pointed to the South of Brazil as an example, in contrast to the Northeastern states, where resources and internet access is greater. Hlengiwe noted that in rural areas in South Africa, mobile connectivity is virtually non-existent. COVID-19 stay-at-home measures rely heavily on Internet connectivity for working, schooling and continuing life from home. This new normal is foreign to those not connected to the Internet and perpetuates ongoing sociocultural, economic, racial and gendered inequalities of digital technologies. For example, the digital gender divide has increased on the African continent since 2013 despite having the fastest growth in internet penetration. In Brazil, a large majority of the Black population accesses the Internet exclusively via mobile connectivity. The web is still largely managed by white Brazilians and has thus created new forms of social segregation and inequity.

Countering the flow of misinformation is also paramount in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19. Nelson pointed out that in communities across East Africa, misinformation originally spread online was quickly shared offline, making it even more difficult to monitor as it permeated offline communities. He explained that state-led restriction of access to information breeds mistrust and creates instead room for speculation and pseudo information sources fill that vacuum. #DefyHateNow has engaged governments in the region to balance restrictive Internet measures. However, ensuring greater freedom and protection of digital spaces requires current policies with reforms to antiquated institutions and engaging with civil society in the formulation and implementation of new policies and measures.

The exorbitant and often unattainable cost of data poses yet another challenge to widespread internet access. Throughout the African continent, activists have been pressuring communication operators to offer more affordable data for low-income consumers. In South Africa, and Zimbabwe the 2016 social media campaign #DataMustFall was successful in gaining the attention of policymakers and regulators. In Brazil, limited online activity through mobile Internet means that consumers do not have access to search engines, fact-checking tools or news websites. Rogerio explained that information exchanged on social media or WhatsApp can be easily manipulated and propagated without any verification.

Combating disinformation, especially during a pandemic, is a civic duty that requires the involvement of all sectors of society, particularly the government, as stated by Hlengiwe and Nelson. Rogerio explained that in Brazil, disinformation has been largely produced by President Bolsanaro and his supporters, thus rendering it extremely difficult to combat. The proliferation of disinformation is also happening at a time where media literacy is very low. To address disinformation, education in media literacy and a continuous engagement with and collaboration between different stakeholders is needed. Hlengiwe gave the example of Real 411, an initiative launched by Media Monitoring Africa, which enables members of the public to report COVID-19 disinformation. While most states rely on health experts for reliable information, governments are responsible for providing credible information as Hlengiwe stated.

Countering the flow of misinformation also faces the barrier of lack of locally relevant content. Media ownership and content creation for example, are largely controlled by international actors, with no connection to local populations. Very often content is not offered in local languages or presented in culturally relevant ways. Conversely, underfunded African media houses lack the capacity to compete with international counterparts. It is therefore imperative that international strategies are contextualized to match local realities to effectively counter rampant misinformation.

In 2019 the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), announced the new Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. In doing so, African countries took an important step forward in securing digital equality and advancing the normative framework on digital rights on the continent. To date, 24 African countries adopted policies and regulations to ensure safety and protect personal data. While Kenya is among the leading countries in the region in internet penetration, it only recently signed the Data Protection Act 2019, its first data protection law. Brazil adopted the Marco Civil da Internet (Internet Bill of Rights) in 2014 to secure network neutrality, freedom of expression and privacy. It later signed the data protection law in 2018, Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados (General Data Protection Law). However, our panelists noted that across Africa and in Brazil, education and awareness about these regulations to the general public are often nonexistent which impact their implementation and ability to guarantee civic rights on and offline.

INNOVATION

Healthcare and Science - Innovative Solutions to COVID-19

The second panel examined how health and science experts have tailored innovations in healthcare to fit the needs of Black communities. It included Dr. Gloria Prado Pino, Global Health Consultant for the State Committee for Prevention, Control & Mitigation of COVID-19 in Chocó, Colombia; Dr. Khatia Mungaumbe, Associate Senior Researcher at the Manhiça Research Centre (CISM) and Lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine at Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique; and Dr. Vukosi Marivate, the ABSA Chair of Data Science at the University of Pretoria and Visiting Principal Data Science Researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

One of the main critiques to African states was a lack of mitigation measures tailored to local contexts. As Vukosi pointed out, in South Africa quarantine and isolation are nearly impossible to implement in townships where ten people may live in a four-room home. Social and physical distancing has worked for the wealthy who can remain in their homes and access food and other provisions. For the rural and urban poor on the continent however, this option quickly became untenable. Limited or lacking socio-economic safety nets meant that many people quickly returned to formal or informal work.

In Colombia, the predominantly Black provinces of Chocó and Valle del Cauca have the most under-resourced, under-staffed and under-invested healthcare systems. The structural and systemic racism that has long plagued Colombia means that the pacific coast is home to the "highest infant and maternal mortality rates, malnutrition, the worst indicators and the worst living standards in the country," as Gloria explained. This reality, coupled with limited electricity coverage and ongoing tensions from the Colombian conflict, results in Black populations being at greater risk and indeed contracting COVID-19 at higher rates than non-Black Colombians.

Khatia, whose work centers evaluating the feasibility of new tools and technologies in countering communicable diseases, explained that prevention and mitigation efforts must be accepted by local populations if they are to work. In mid-June, Mozambique had a reported 424 cases of COVID-19 according to the Africa CDC. Khatia highlighted the importance of testing new treatments and devices for disease control especially for communicable diseases prevalent in the region. These measures include communities' willingness to accept the treatment, the practicality of the intervention, potential barriers and facilitators for implementation and the cost to the state and other stakeholders. Therefore, it is imperative that new technologies, such as Indoor Residual Spraying and Microbicides for Malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention (respectively), are culturally relevant and driven by those in the community who best understand the context.

Ultimately, she asserts that Africans who have lived through multiple epidemics and communicable diseases are best placed to share lessons learned from these types of epidemics. "Communicable diseases have been responsible for [the high] mortality [rates] of our populations. We [Africans] are the best people to convey the lessons learned." This sentiment was echoed by Vukosi, who stressed the importance of collecting and sharing data about the pandemic."

Infection rates and other data regarding COVID-19 have similarly been scarce in countries across the continent. In South Africa for example, in the initial days of the pandemic, municipalities and government officials would hold daily briefings to share infection and spread information. However, once it became evident that community spread had become widespread, accurate information and data was limited; the daily briefings stopped and even accessing up-to-date information on government websites became difficult. **As Vukosi put it, "data is political".** In order to downplay the numbers and rate of infection, local and regional authorities offered less and less information. This led to a dearth of data not only for concerned citizens, but for health, science and other experts working on mapping the spread of the disease.

Disease mapping has been a central tool to understanding and mitigating the spread of communicable and other illnesses. This mostly online tool which has been used predominantly in Europe is harder to harness in countries in Africa and the Global South generally, where limited internet access and lacking reliable data have curtailed the use of this technology. However, by relying on official statements, announcements and statistics from the South African government, Vukosi has been able to tailor data mapping not only to share relevant data but also to begin to predict how COVID-19 will spread.

Based at the University of Pretoria, Vukosi leads the Data Science for Social Impact Research Group (DSFSI) which has developed a framework for sharing publicly available data to inform the COVID-19 outbreak in Africa. Given the lack of a national repository of COVID-19 infections and related deaths, DSFSI looks at government infographics, statements and other official announcements to populate their database. The data, which is made machine-readable, is sourced and made accessible to researchers, health workers and the public through their repository. The team has now collaborated with Boston University and other partners to copy this process for other African countries.

The response to COVID-19 in Chocó, Colombia has also relied on sectoral innovation. By mid-June, Chocó had just under 1000 confirmed cases and 42 deaths. 73% of Chocó's overall population is Black, it is greatly underserved and suffers from such a lack of electricity and connectivity. Many residents attest to having electricity for less than 12 hours a day. As testing and mitigation efforts spread from Bogota to the rest of the country, it quickly became evident that the Pacific regions were at much greater risk. The COVID-19 taskforce therefore implemented a system of telemedicine to curb the spread of the virus. Gloria, who is the first Afro-Latinx to graduate from Harvard Medical School, led Chocó's municipal government in developing a 'buddy system' between clinics and doctors in remote areas with hospitals in urban areas to better diagnose and administer treatment to infected patients.

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Devices such as computers and portable WiFi have been instrumental in providing doctors in Chocó and surrounding areas with medical support and technical assistance. Universities, research groups and other institutions have also been called upon to lend their expertise. Environmental protection and GIS (Geospatial Information & Technology) groups have turned their efforts to identifying communities at greater risk for infection. This information is shared with health workers to increase testing, information sharing and other mitigation measures. For example, the University of Chocó has helped identify young community leaders as drivers of trusted and factual information regarding the pandemic. Like in South Africa, Chocó's police department has used drones to distribute flyers about prevention methods. These local innovations steered by young Black leaders which employ new technologies in ways that make sense for the community are key in answering both the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mitigating the Economic Impact of COVID-19

Beyond the illness and deaths, the pandemic has led to unprecedented economic costs that have disproportionately impacted Black communities. The pandemic is likely to increase youth unemployment globally, particularly in Africa and Latin America, where more than 50% of their respective populations are below the age of 30. Overcoming the double pandemic of COVID-19 and structural racism will require that every sector of society steps out of the business as usual framework.

Even in these uncertain times, young Black entrepreneurs are rising above present challenges, building new avenues for their businesses and revolutionizing economic markets to fortify Black communities against the economic devastation of the crisis. The final webinar included three such entrepreneurs: Paulo Rogerio, Co-founder of Vale do Dendê, Brazil, Norbert Haguma, Co-founder of AfricaGen, Rwanda, and Odunayo Eweniyi, CEO of PiggyVest, Nigeria.

The correlation between existing infrastructure and the long-term impact of COVID-19 is clear. By mid-June, Brazil reportedly had the second highest number of COVID-19 related deaths in the world. As over 50% of the population is of African descent, the existing structural racism means that COVID-19 has been four times deadlier for Black communities. Paulo explained that historically racist health practices have led to serious chronic health conditions in Brazil's Black population and little to no access to quality health and sanitation services that put Black populations in an increasingly precarious situation.

Black-owned businesses have been particularly hurt by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly SMEs and grassroots ventures in favela communities because they lack access to credit, loans and government support. They also suffer from limited connectivity and cannot easily move their businesses online. As Paulo highlighted, many Black small business owners do not have relationships with or even standing bank accounts from which they operate. Most do not have cash reserves and depend on their daily earnings to secure enough cash flow to survive.

The pandemic also exposed the complete lack of infrastructure in Nigeria, from health to public services. According to Odunayo, more young people are putting money aside as there are no government programs such as unemployment benefits. Populations working in the informal sector--about 80% of Nigerians--were particularly hit by lockdown measures as they had no way of earning a living. With existing high levels of inequalities and extreme poverty on the rise, the country has faced unrest during lockdown, including murder, robbery and street violence. In lieu of appropriate state-led action, CSOs and the private sector provided different platforms, resources and immediate relief actions to help SMEs and budding entrepreneurs survive the financial crisis.

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In turn, Rwanda is a completely different picture of preparedness. The country went into complete lockdown and quickly identified the vulnerable populations to provide support. Norbert explained that the successful system in place was built over many years following the 1994 genocide.

The booming entrepreneurship ecosystem supported by the government meant that a collaboration between the state, entrepreneurs and other creatives generated immediate efficient responses to the pandemic. Within a couple of days, Kigali's largest coworking space for IT entrepreneurs, KLab generated a toll-free number to provide medical and health information, and to report on any Covid-related issue. To adjust to the online learning requirements, the government put all curricula from primary education to university level online in about fourteen days. **Successes in mitigating the impact was a result of existing trust between the different sectors of society as well as government response.** What's more, educational stakeholders have complemented the online learning platforms with courses on the radio and television as well as engaged with the private sector to offer students lower prices for internet connection.

Our panelists also emphasized the importance of decentralizing technology and innovation and their role in the advancement of young communities. Paulo's startup accelerator, Vale do Dendê (Dendê Valley) received 107 applications from Black entrepreneurs. They have been particularly supportive of Black women and have worked to diversify and expand the Black money ecosystem in Brazil. To help entrepreneurs survive the impact of the pandemic and nurture economic recovery, the startup launched an emergency COVID-19 fund. The startup also supports entrepreneurs in the areas of mental health, provides capacity building on finances, and supports access to bank loans and credits, digital skills. It also fosters innovation to respond to the crisis and structural racism. For example, AfroSaude, a platform that connects Black health professionals to patients who seek representation and better service, offered a toll-free number with reliable COVID-related information and medical assistance.

Nonetheless, Norbert stresses that these **innovative responses are only made possible with the adequate infrastructure, particularly internet connectivity and energy.** His youth organization, AfricaGen, has been developing the African Digital Index (ADI) which measures the progress of digitization in Africa. This set of 30 indices evaluates the readiness of economies on the continent by measuring internet connectivity, energy supply, human capital, digital integration of businesses, governmental digital integration, digital rights, policies and regulation to ensure safety and privacy of internet users, and investment in research and development. Norbert emphasized the importance of access and availability of data, "you can't progress when you are not measuring." An example of this is the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences which generated efficient responses to the pandemic from African states. The centers convened mathematicians from across the continent to find ways to test as little as possible and obtain the most accurate results in terms of the dynamics and the spread of COVID-19.
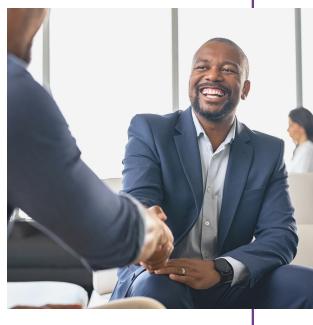
Harnessing innovation in digital tools to achieve financial freedom, Odunayo founded one of Nigeria's most popular fintech startups, PiggyVest. The automated savings platform allows young Nigerians to set aside funds for micro-investment opportunities. As a female entrepreneur and one of the very few who was able to raise large sums of money for her venture, Odunayo has dedicated her efforts to bringing visibility to Black female talent and bringing them into the technology ecosystem. Female entrepreneurs constitute a large untapped source of innovation, income-generating opportunities and financial growth, representing 40% of the Nigerian population."

Despite their contribution, they have been operating in an unfavourable business and socio-cultural environment from structural gender inequalities, infrastructural shortcomings, low or no access to capital, and weak institutions among many others. Odunayo stressed the importance of being a visible woman, "so the next woman doesn't have to go through that" when building a business from start to scale. Access to a global network of female entrepreneurs can enable them to network, find the right investment, and receive necessary support they would otherwise be denied in their home country. Against the discriminatory and limiting backdrop of the Nigerian tech ecosystem for female entrepreneurs, many hubs and female-led networks work to support the inclusion of women in technology including Wine and Whine, For Creative Girls, GreenHouse Labs, She Leads Africa, and Itanna among many others.

Digital economies have transformed banking and service provision globally, particularly on the African continent. Norbert notes that digital economies will serve as the foundation for the future of the continent and communities of the Diaspora. 'It is an enabler because it allows us to connect and aggregate our wisdom and knowledge to solve things'. In Rwanda, mobile payments rose five-fold in the early months of the pandemic. But it is still extremely difficult, time-costly and expensive to send money from one African country to another. Despite their limited access to the Internet and digital skills, Black Brazilian entrepreneurs have increased their use of digital technologies to adapt to the new normal, promoting and selling their products and services as Paulo stated earlier. However, Norbert stressed the importance of greater connectivity between Africans as well as the Diaspora.

THE WAY FORWARD

Timeline of Our Upcoming Strategies

The failed predictions and condescending publications of the inevitable apocalypse of the COVID-19 pandemic on the African continent paralleled the habitual narratives reproduced about the region. Fears mounted over how the disease would unfold and questions arose on the capacity of African expertise to help stem the spread and impact of the disease. **In the Diaspora, the media covered almost exclusively the disproportionate mortality rate of Black populations.** Very few media platforms have mentioned the ideas, knowledge and innovations produced by Black youth for stability and recovery. Continuing to marginalize their work and contributions is a missed opportunity that hurts not only Black communities but also the wider world.

Through the GBY series, we see what is possible when young Black people are equipped to see the latent potential around them and turn it into opportunity - especially in contexts where young people are the greatest asset. **Black innovators and entrepreneurs are changing the dominant narratives about themselves, their lives and their communities. They are creating new decentralized spaces for progress, innovation and inclusivity. Their initiatives are working locally, regionally and globally and support for their projects should similarly come from local and international partners.** They are much better equipped to understand and fight the spread of COVID-19 in their communities and build new avenues to mitigate the inevitable fall out. The importance of Black youth taking control and shaping the narrative of their endeavors in these times cannot be overemphasized.

This is why GBY creates spaces for them to connect to one another and see themselves as part of a global community, which forges linkages between Africa and the Diaspora and within the African continent. GBY prizes knowledge from the Global South and works to establish South-South connections, that have been broken by slavery, colonialism and neo-colonial economic policies. **Like the webinars, the GBY Fest and the GBY Fellowship highlight the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of Black youth and showcase how their work is changing the narrative of Black people.** Through initiatives, GBY amplifies innovations, fosters collaboration and the development of new economies for communities that have been ignored and/ or relegated to the periphery. **GBY believes that only by centering the perspectives, knowledge and expertise of young Black leaders will we ultimately develop sustainable solutions to the major challenges we face today.**

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MEET THE AUTHORS

Niousha Roshani has acquired a diversity of skills in languages, research, policy and practice, management and hands-on experience working in more than 25 countries in directing organizations and programs, establishing strategic partnerships and working with innovators, CSOs, philanthropy, the private, public and third sector. In her past roles, she has advised governments on child rights, youth advancement, digital rights strategies and establishing global partnerships. In 2018 she co-founded Black Women Disrupt. She is currently a fellow at the Portulans Institute researching AI in Africa and Latin America. She was a Technology and Human Rights Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School, an IDB-ALARI Postdoctoral Fellow on Race and Public Policy in Latin America at the Afro-Latin American Research Institute and a research fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. She holds a PhD in Education from the University College London (UCL) and a Master's degree in international development from Cornell University.

Nyeleti Honwana is a Program Officer at the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, which funds research on violence, conflict and aggression. Here she serves as the lead organizer of the Young African Scholars Program, a two-year mentorship program that supports junior African scholars completing their PhDs at African institutions. She serves on the steering committee of the Africa Grantmaker's Affinity Group (AGAG), a network of international philanthropic organizations funding a variety of projects on the African continent. She co-leads the Africa, Peace and Security Network, a group that convenes professionals in the private, public and third sector working at the intersections of peace and security on the continent in effort to promote cross-sectoral pollination and collaboration. She holds a BA in Contemporary History from the University of Sussex, UK and an M.A. in International Affairs from Boston University.

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