

REPORT OF 2019 AFRICA NIGHT CONFERENCE



Photo credit: Johanna Schünke

INTRODUCTION

The Africa Gala Night program was initiated in line with African customary practice of “end of year stock-taking and thanksgiving”. End of year stock-taking or evaluation of actions and decisions, not just by individuals, but as a society, is an age-long tradition in the African culture: birthing the idea of agenda-setting for the incoming year. That is, besides the appraisal, it is usually an opportunity to set community development goals for the incoming year and prioritize obligations. It is in this light, that the maiden edition of Africa Gala Night program was conceived.

The goal of the event was to build a network of Africans in diaspora and collaborators for engagement on Africa development issues. It was expected to galvanize African scholars and professionals, African and German communities; not only to celebrate culture, diversity and social cohesion but to interact and present or share their opinion on a subject of significant mutual value, especially to Africa’s development. E.g. deepening democracy, addressing the Africa emigration problem, human rights, achieving sustainable development goals, addressing vaccine hesitancy, etc. The expected outcome is to increase the community of multipliers, inspired by Africans in the diaspora in partnership with friends of Africa.

The 2019 theme was: **Addressing risk factors stimulating Africa-Europe Migration**. The night provided a free atmosphere to participants who delved into the Africa-Europe

migration problems and share ideas on why and how Africans in diaspora can play a role, in collaboration with the German government, friends, and organizations. The night's highlight was the podium discussing relating to what can be done to stem the tide of Africa-Europe migration.

BACKGROUND

The second edition of Africa Night Conference took place at Victor's Residenz-Hotel Erfurt – Häßlerstraße 17, 99086, Erfurt: on December 21, 2019. The program began at 17:00 and went on until 22:00. A total of **128 participants** attended the conference (appendix 1). The attendee's affiliation cut across different spectrum of endeavours, including attendants from the sector of academia, the private as well as the public sector, church, and from the African Community and German Community: University of Erfurt, Fachhochschule Erfurt, Bauhaus University Weimar, FSU Jena, Technical University Ilmenau, University of Würzburg, University of Ulm, University of Vienna, Hochschule Coburg, Fairafric GmbH, Sohay Solar Association Africa, Hilfe für Zanzibar, Kids Care Campus e.V., Plattform e.V., Campana & Scott GmbH, Afrikanisch-Deutscher Verein für Kultur und Bildung e.V., Redeemed Christian Church, Research Awake Africa Initiative (RAAI), BA English Communication Training GmbH, BWTW e.V., Caritas Erfurt, etc.



Photo credit: Johanna Schümke

WELCOME ADDRESS

The welcome address was delivered by Frau Mirjam Kruppa, Beauftragte für Integration, Migration und Flüchtlinge in Thüringen. Her speech was centered around an introduction of her work, connecting with the goals of Africa Partners Initiative e.V (API). Furthermore, she announced a project for the year 2020 dealing with migration from Africa to Europe and highlighted she would like to cooperate with API in the near future. She complimented the initiative of the conference on the theme, which seeks solution that goes beyond here in Germany and promised a cooperation of the office in working together to operationalise the outcome of the event. The commissioner provided the immeasurable depth of the issues and optimism for multi stakeholder approach as a prerequisite in addressing migratory concerns.



Photo credit: Johanna Schünke

INTRODUCTION AND AGENDA SETTING

The 2019 program and theme were officially introduced to the public. Mr. Collins Adeyanju gave a presentation on the goal of the Africa Night Conference project, why the Africa partners Initiative e.V. was established and the motivation behind focusing on the current designed framework for the region's development through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He emphasized that the conference goal is to forge collective conversation about Africa and Africans' "development issues"; especially, to provide a forum for not only sharing views inspired by network of Africans in diaspora and their host community of partners and friends, but also to galvanized and articulate intervention strategies or solutions to the challenges being discussed. But more importantly, using the

solutions or outcomes generated from the conference to develop an evidence-based project, as a contribution arising from Africans in the diaspora and their host community of partners and friends. “The night is a preparation to discuss the sensitive subject of immense bi-national ramification and end with creating mutually collaborative synergy towards tackling 21st-century challenges, not only of Africa but amongst Africans and Germans in general. It is meant to share ideas on how Africans in the diaspora can play a role, in collaboration with German friends and organizations.”

“We are thrilled that we can build a structure (annual African Night Conference) that brings together Africans and Germans from all walks of life in Thüringen and other parts of Germany to Erfurt, to sit and discuss, socialize, engage, ask and answer, dance and share food, as a way to learn and foster deeper relations for the good of Africa, Africans, and friends of Africa”.



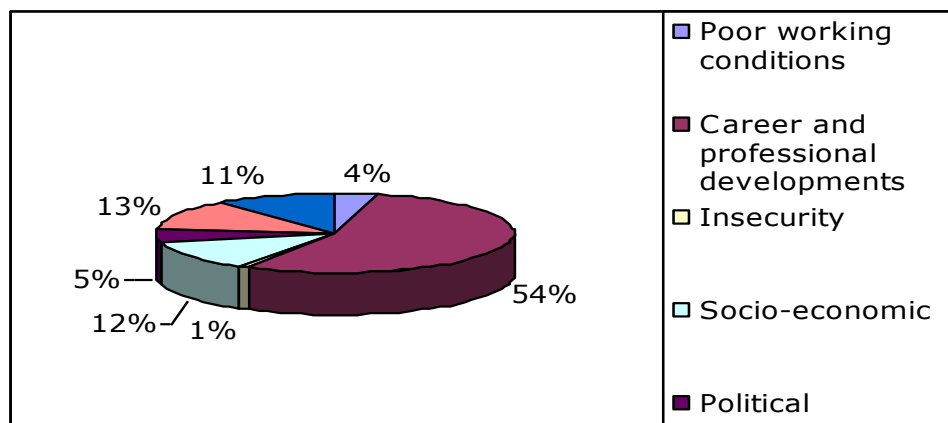
Photo credit: Johanna Schümke

Mr. Collins began his presentation by reminiscing on the last edition of the conference and the theme; which was “Promoting Positive behaviour for Vaccine Acceptance in Africa and Role of Africans in Diaspora” and the interests it generated; not only amongst Africans in Germany but amongst Germans and friends of Africa who have little or no insights into Africa and the challenges therein. Even more interesting is the ability of these friends of Africa to be able to contribute (non-monetarily or aid) to shaping views of what can be done collaboratively towards addressing the challenges the continent faces, but also Africans in Germany/abroad. Finally, the last year's conference outcome is currently being developed into a project called “Africans to Africa Frank Talk”. A video, audio and animation campaign

built on using an evidence-based study called “5C” on the psychological determinants of vaccine hesitancy from Prof. Dr. Cornelia Betsch. The participants were impressed that, the outcome of the conference is being transformed into concrete action or project to solve problems in the region. Also briefly touched about last year’s conference was the presentation of awards to some individuals and organizations who had supported Africa or Africans towards development. This was to recognize and show appreciation and at the same time encourage their efforts. Some of the recipients were; Spirit of Football e.V, Caritasverband für das Bistum e.V., Springboard to Learning e.V, ANSOLE e.V, and others.

The core of Mr. Collins’ presentation focuses on the dilemma of Africa’s emigration problem. “who takes care of Africa if everyone leaves or how does Africa grow if no one returns or give back”. According to the African Union Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018 – 2027), over 70,000 Africans emigrate abroad annually; and in 2017, 25 million sub-Saharan African migrants are living outside their home countries (PEW research). In fact, 81%, 78%, 48%, and 41% (Liberia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Cape Verde respectively) of professional nurses born and trained in Africa had emigrated. More problematic is the dwindling opportunity prospects; because Africa is the world’s youngest continent, 10 - 12 million young Africans joining the labour force each year. Yet the continent is able to create only about 3 million jobs annually. Despite this huge gap, we still believe solving these problems must be internal (inspired by Africans, with support from friends of Africa); which is why Akinwumi A. Adesina, President of the African Development Bank said “The future of Africa’s youth does not lie in migration to Europe; it should not be at the bottom of the Mediterranean; it lies in a prosperous Africa. We must create greater economic opportunities for our youth right at home in Africa”. “This is a crisis on our hands. However, what can we do from here as Africans in the diaspora”? To begin addressing it, we need to look at the reasons briefly.

First, we must look at why Africans migrate to Europe, even through dangerous means e.g. the Mediterranean Sea. Africarecruit research shows below varying significant factors stimulating Africa-Europe migration; career and professional opportunities being the main driver.



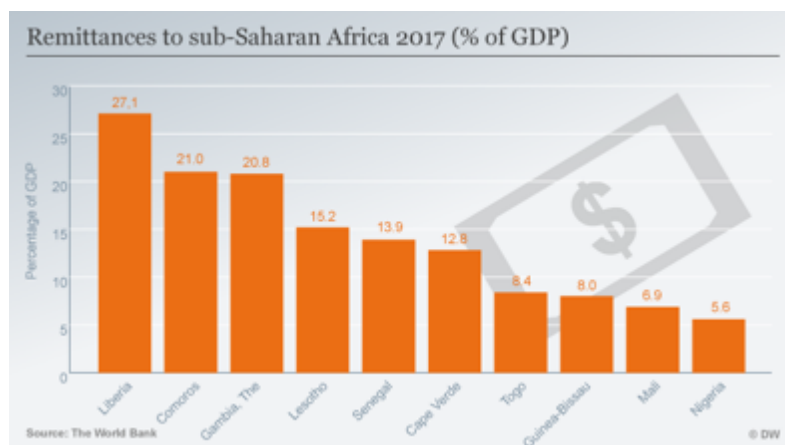
HOW DO WE ADDRESS IT?

The presentation highlighted a few logical explanations at the disposal of diaspora Africans; especially in Germany.

1. Remittance in strategic social ventures that have high multiplier effect
 - a. financial
 - b. expertise

Remittance-Financial seems the most popular one and widespread among Africans in diaspora. Unfortunately, there has not been an equal amount invested in **Remittance-Expertise**. For us at Africa Partners Initiative, our belief is that while financial remittance is good, what Africa needs to grow and discourage the illegal migration is more of skills transfer (creating opportunities for young people). It would be better received if it is facilitated by Africans in the diaspora, compared to the status quo, which of course revolves around foreign aid.

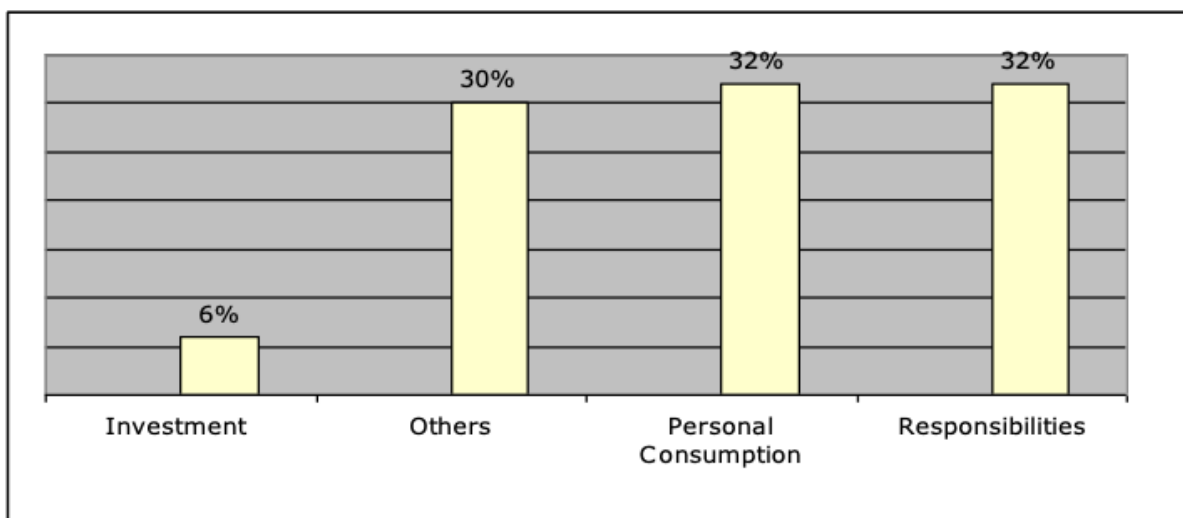
A closer look at the remittance-financial shows that Africans in the diaspora contribute more to the continent compared to the exaggerated foreign aid or even direct foreign investment to the continent. According to the World Bank 2017 data (see figure below), remittances form a tremendous proportion of the GDP of several countries. E.g. a quarter of the Liberian GDP (27%) is attributed to Liberians in the diaspora; Gambia - 21%, Lesotho - 16%, Nigeria 6%, and others. According to the 2019 Nigeria Economic Outlook from PWC, Nigerians in diaspora sent an estimated US\$25 billion in remittance to the country in 2018, representing 6% of her GDP. This figure is equal to 83% of the Federal Government budget in 2018 and 11 times more than the foreign direct investment into the country during the same period. Similarly, the remittance was 7 times larger than the net official foreign aid received in 2017 (US\$3.4 billion). This Invariably means, Nigerians in diaspora are the biggest investors or financiers of the country, besides internal revenue. The question is, how can these huge remittances be a channel to ventures or social endeavours that are reproducible?



World Bank, 2017

“In the contemporary global context in which African governments are dependent on Western financial institutions for the running of their economies, at the micro-level the economic survival and prosperity of families have become equally dependent on having family members in the Diaspora” (Akyeampong, 2000).

Mr. Collins, however, mentioned that his concern about the financial remittance is that it is usually not strategically invested or spent. I.e. are not spent on ventures or investments that reproduce the funds, rather on basic household consumptions. The figure below gives a vivid picture of the argument. Only 6% of the funds remitted to sub-Saharan Africa is a channel for investment purposes. Therefore, economic growth in the region cannot be self-sustaining despite the huge remittances. The presentation urged a change of mindset about remittance towards increasing the percentages on investment than the others.



Africarecruit, Commonwealth Business Council, United Kingdom, 2003

The second remittance (**Remittance-Expertise**) in his opinion, which is as equally powerful and more effective to drive development faster in Africa than the remittance-financial, especially if it's not strategic as suggested above, is the **Remittance of Expertise**. That is African professionals in the diaspora (Germany) offering their expertise in the form of training and mentorship to young people/others in Africa. This will create expertise and skills that are either not available or contemporary, hence, create local opportunities. This can be done once or twice or as often as possible; hence the goal of the conference, which is about bringing people together on how this can be done and what the focus should be on. This is the vision of Africa Partners Initiative e.V. (API): “To serve as a platform for ideas and knowledge exchange for Africa’s development” is primarily based on this concept; in addition to collaborating with German friends, organizations and friends of Africa”.

The presentation ended with presenting the goal and strategic objectives of the initiative to the participants and seeking collaboration and partnership; at the same time highlighting the 2020 agenda. The goal of API is to serve as a platform for coordination of collaborative

and mutually beneficial knowledge exchange between Africa and the rest of the world, towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda for Africa; particularly seven out of them namely: No Poverty, Good Health and Well-being, Clean Water and Sanitation, Decent Work & Economic Growth, Climate Action, Peace and Justice and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships to achieve the Goals.

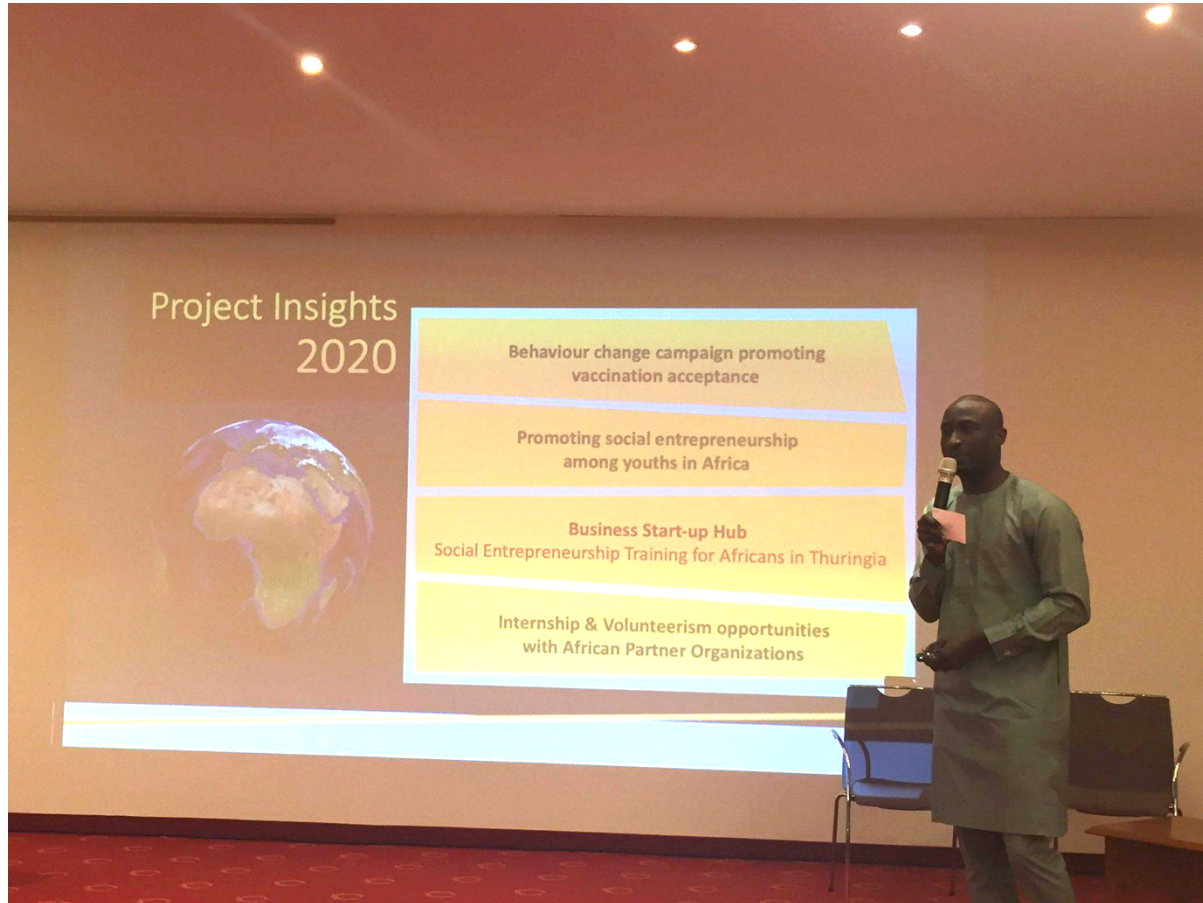


Photo credit: Kirsten Wünsche



KEYNOTE SPEAKER'S ADDRESS

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Dr. Harald Dörig, Honorary professor at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena and Vice President of the European Section of the International Association of Asylum and Migration Judges. It was titled "Factors stimulating Africa-Europe Migration". The address highlighted the significance of educating the populace about the misunderstanding surrounding perception of African migrants in Germany, vis-à-vis migrants from across other regions.

Photo credit: Johanna Schünke

PODIUM DISCUSSION

1. Panel

The podium discussion was the main highlight of the night. It comprised 5 panellists. The panellists are Prof. Dr. Harald Dörig¹, Dr. Wilfried Zoungrana², Aline Mugisho³, Agboola Oni-Orisan⁴ and Collins Adeyanju⁵ (also as the moderator). The panel touched on questions/topic such as:

- The fundamental drivers of migration from Africa to Europe
- Why risks had minimal analysis during choices on illegal migration?
- If psychological influence of perception of Europe by the communities a pull factor
- If the 'not seeing anything good in once's society' provide the basis for migration, even despite availability of local opportunities.
- If foreign aid and politics of 'giving people fish, not teaching them how to fish' a significant vacuum that prevents critical thinking as solution-provider
- How do we contribute meaningful solutions from the diaspora?

The panel was moderated by Collins Adeyanju and lasted for 30 minutes. This time was used to lay strong foundational arguments and evidence-based analysis on the theme of the night: identifying and addressing risk factors stimulating Africa-Europe migration. All of the above topics and more were covered. Consensus from the panel tailors towards using multidimensional approach, including involvement of Africans in diaspora and partners; who had never been involved before.

¹ Prof. Dr. Harald Dörig has been a judge at the German Supreme Court in Leipzig from 2000 to 2018, where he was primarily responsible for immigration and refugee law. He holds a "Doctor of Law" in Constitutional and Comparative Law at the University of Frankfurt am Main (Germany). He was appointed as "Professor of Law" at the Law Faculty of FSU Jena (Germany), where he teaches on European Human Rights. He is the Vice President of the International Association of Refugee and Migration Judges –European Chapter (IARMJ).

² Dr. Wilfried Zoungrana holds a master's degree and a PhD in International Relations from the University of Erfurt. His doctoral thesis was published in two volumes: *Method as Theory: Lakatos, Methodology, and Interpretive International Relations* (wvb 2017) and *Knowledge at War: Epistemology and Terrorism in IR Theory* (wvb 2017). His latest publication is *No Country for Migrants? Critical Perspectives on Asylum, Immigration, and Integration in Germany* (Brill, 2019).

³ Aline Mugisho is a Doctoral candidate at the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt, Germany. Her current research explores informal strategies developed by women for protection and how these forms their resiliency in times of conflict. She previously worked on various research projects at the University of Witwatersrand (African Centre for Migration and Society) such as Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) and Regional Perspectives on Local Governance of Migration, Migrant's Needs and Vulnerability and Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion Research Project. She holds a master's degree in Forced Migration Studies and bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communication (ISA).

⁴ Agboola Oni-Orisan: He Studied at the University of Ilorin and University of Lagos in Civil Engineering (B. Engr.) and Master of Business Administration (MBA Finance) respectively. He previously worked as a banker in Lagos, Nigeria. He a pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God since 1991. He facilitated the establishment of the congregation in Cologne, Erfurt and Leipzig. Currently he works as a Network Planner for DHL in Leipzig Airport. He is a motivational speaker and an International facilitator at Seminars and Conventions especially the Leipzig Leadership Summit in Leipzig.

⁵ Collins Adeyanju is a lecturer at the department of media and communication science and doctoral candidate at the Centre for Empirical Research in Economics and Behavioural Sciences (CEREB), University of Erfurt. He holds Bachelor and master's degrees in international Relations; and holds a Master of Public Policy (MPP) from the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt. Mr. Adeyanju previously worked for both the national and international development donor organizations such as: Global Fund, Bill & Melinda Gate Foundation, USAID projects, WHO, AMP, GIZ and Christian Aid UK.



Photo credit: Johanna Schünke

2. Plenary/Q&A

The podium discussion lasted for 30 minutes and thereafter proceeded by the plenary. The plenary was designed to enable the engagement of the audience to, not only contribute to the topic of discussion, but also offer solutions. Participants of the conference were motivated to discuss issues related to risk factors inspiring migration between Africa and Europe and high participation in the plenary was present. It was highly appreciated that all the diversities represented during the night took part in the plenary discussion and contributed to the diverse of perspectives.



Photo credit: Johanna Schünke

OUTCOME OF THE PROGRAM

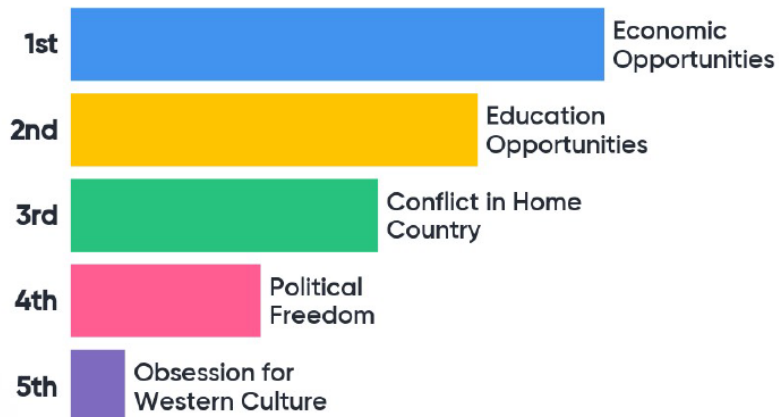
Knowledge of Africans in diaspora and the German community was expanded on migration issues, especially as it affects Africa-Europe. There was a general consensus of the value of doing something, however little it may be and forming collaboration with friends of Africa and partners in Germany to achieve the goal. Some of the other outcomes are:

- To work with African experts in Germany and Germans towards technology-based knowledge transfers.
- To facilitate practical scientific exchange or medical equipment donations. E.g. giving tools or equipments that are no longer useful to companies or organizations and transfer them for use in schools or as public utilities in African communities.
- The importance of investing in research ventures in Africa.
- To vigorously support education, to curb the human trafficking that characterise migrants; especially among women.
- To support social entrepreneurs in African communities. Investing in social entrepreneurs will accelerate grassroot mobilization of resources and idea for solutions, thereby transforming them into profitable ventures for the common good of the society.
- Fight corruption and promote good governance at levels of African society
- Foreign partners must invest in skills building and small-scale enterprises back in Africa, especially for women, rather than foreign aid to governments.
- Africans in diaspora should add its voices to the clarion call to give Africa back its market. The saturation of the local markets with local substitute goods, at far cheaper prices is disadvantageous to the local economy and livelihood of people.
- Finally, scholars and experts or professionals of African origin in diaspora should consider returning home to contribute their gained knowledge to progress of the continent

A cloud-based polling tool - “Mentimeter” was used to engage the plenary to measure participants’ personal understandings and views of factors driving migration between Africa and Europe: Attendants answered questions displayed on screen in the hall, which were accessible via logging in to an online survey tool. The results of the polls were shown directly on the screen, which also had an entertaining aspect. The focus of this method was enabling participants to voice their personal opinion and experience regarding topics of the evening as well as sociodemographic information (e.g. “What do you personally consider factors stimulating migration?” or “Which nationality do you identify with?”).

What do you personally consider a primary driver for migration between Africa and Europe?

Mentimeter



Example of slide used during the Live Online Survey

For more results of the “Mentimeter” survey, please see appendix 2.

DINNER

The participants were offered dinner, of both African and German dishes. They were introduced to exquisite varieties of African dishes, and also German and vegetarian/vegan alike. Although mainly African dishes, but because of the diversity of guests, varieties were incorporated to give them choices and also a semblance of Africa-European convergence.



Photo credit: Johanna Schünke

REMARK FROM JOSÉ MANUEL PACA

Mr. José Paca is a member of the Ausländerbeirat of the City of Erfurt as well as Vice President of the Federal Migration and Integration Council. He gave a 15 minutes talk on addressing and empowering Africans living in the Europe and Germany, but precisely Africans in the Federal State of Thüringen.



Photo credit: Kirsten Wünsche

VOTE OF THANKS

Pastor Michael Sia gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the Africa Partners Initiative e.V. (API) and the organizing team. The night ended with dance to African music and tunes.

POST-EVENT EVALUATION

Participant's opinion was sorted on various aspects of the program and their feedback was obtained. A paper survey was designed, and participants filled in forms that they were given when entering the venue. This survey contained question on how attendants learned about the event, how they evaluated the registration process, the topic of the evening, Keynote Speech and Podium Discussion, venue, food, and which professional sector or which community (African / German / other) they would assign themselves to.

For the results of the evaluation, please see appendix 1.

WAY FORWARD/LESSONS LEANT

- There is a general consensus that, the Africa Gala Night should be sustained.
- There is a need to plan and fundraise for the next Africa Gala Night event, much in advance.
- There is a need to hire 2 paid project assistants, 50 hours each and funded from the program budget; to manage and coordinate the financial and administrative tasks.

ORGANIZING TEAM

Collins Adeyanju, Kirsten Wünsche, Grigoriy “Grisha” Grigoryev, Dr. Muiyiwa Alalade, Dr. Olivia Ugokwe-Akande, Adenike Alare, Gbolade Willoughby, Pastor Michael Sia, Sandy Arnold, Lena Rudolf, Andrew Kisekka, Stephen Tete Mantey, Samuel Okpara and Benjamin Anthony.



Photo credit: Lena Rudolf

CONTACT

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Facebook: Africa Partners Initiative

Twitter: @africaapartners

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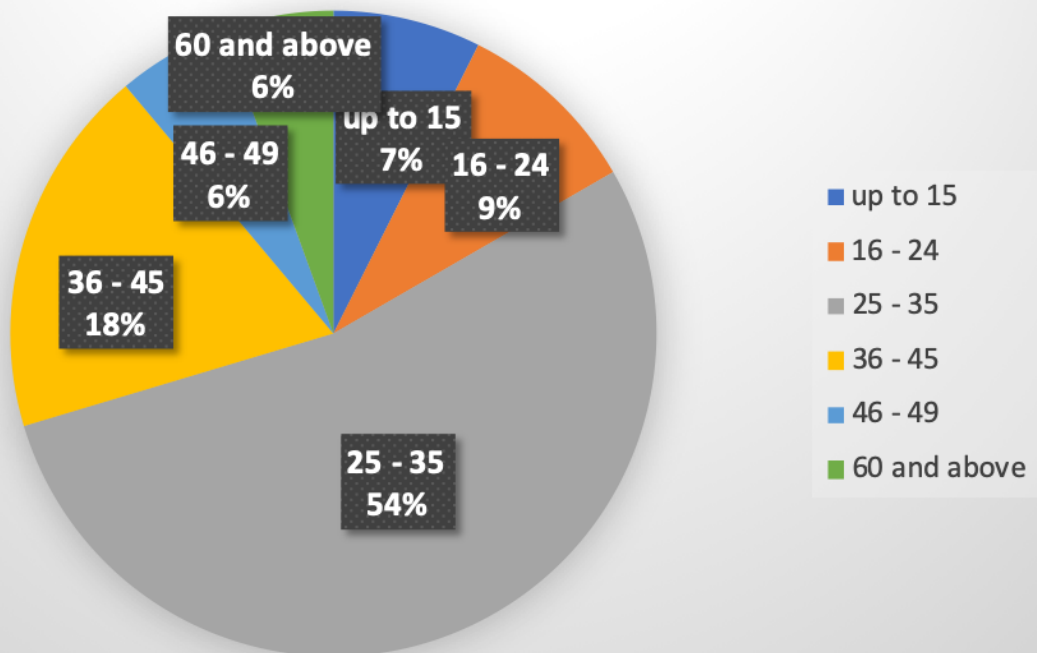
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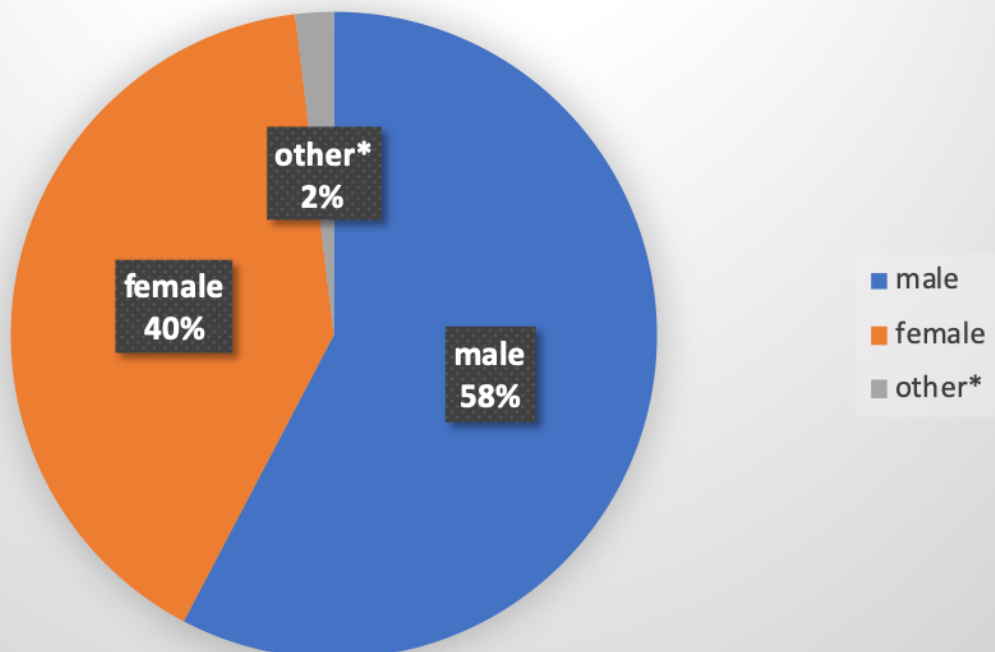


APPENDIX 1: RESULTS OF POST-EVENT EVALUATION

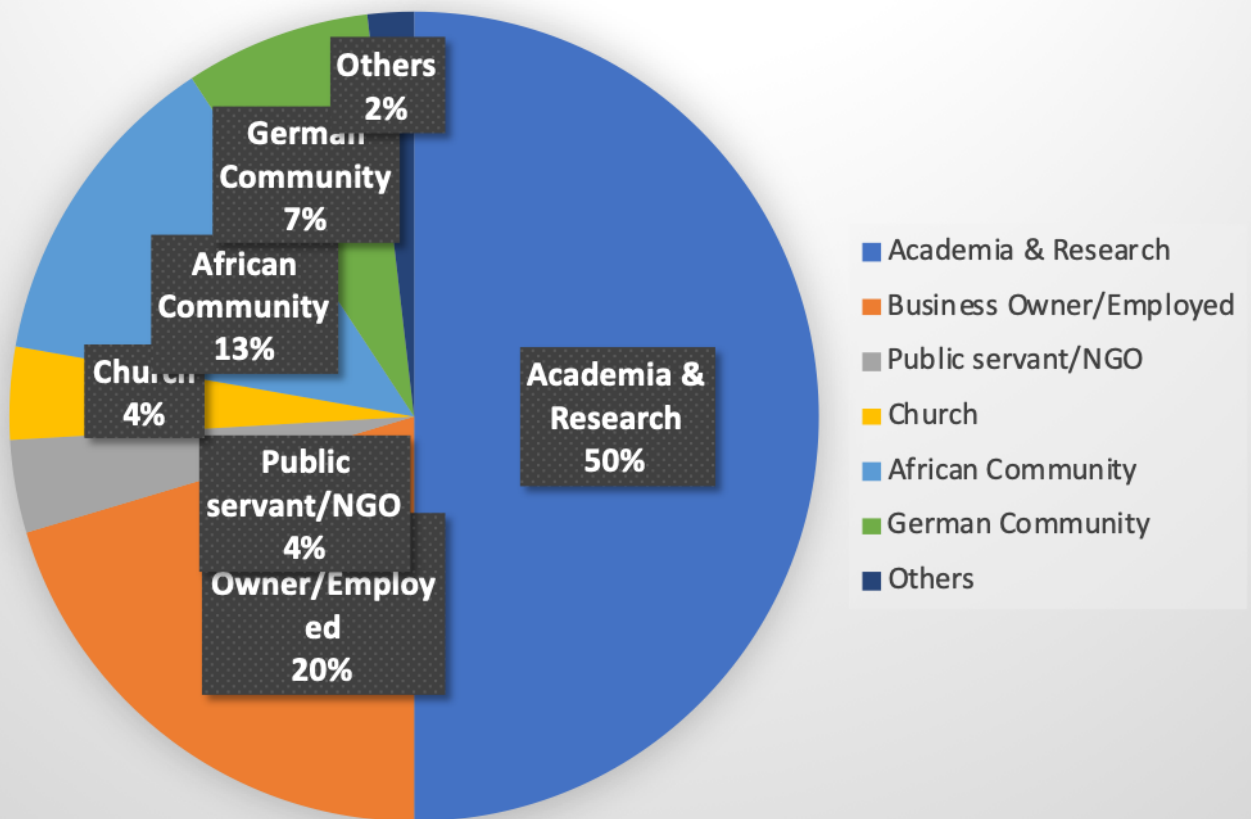
Age Groups of Participants



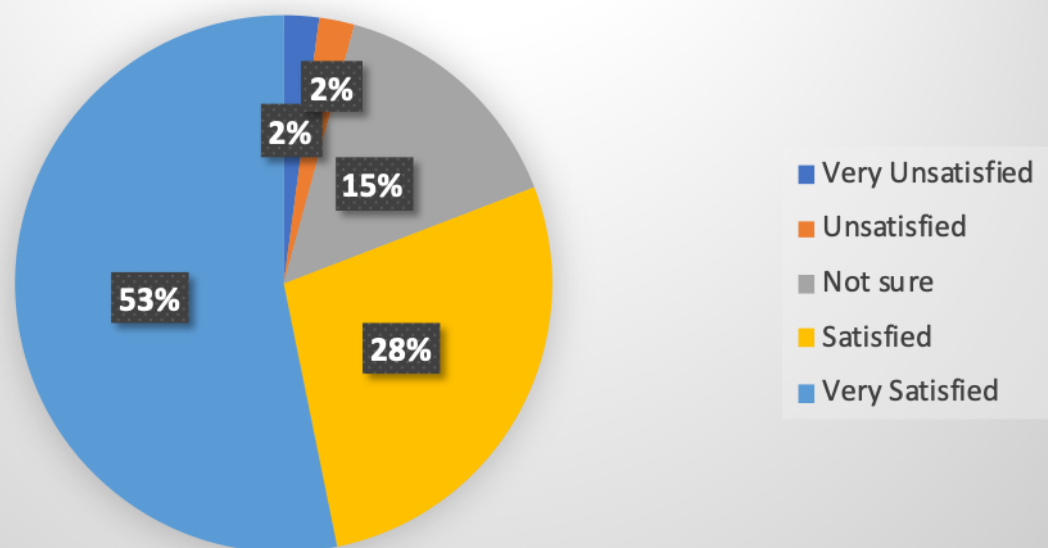
Gender of Participants



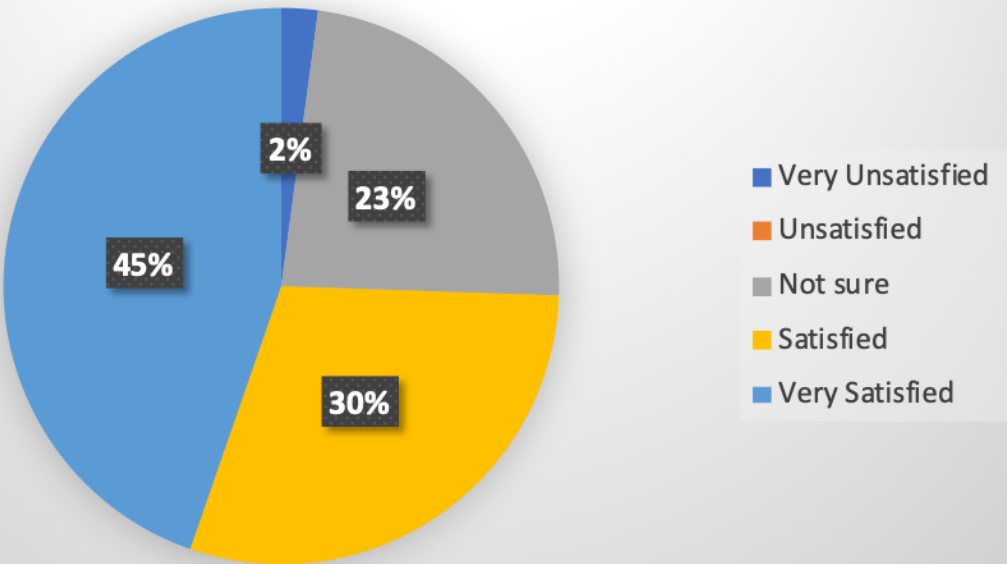
Participant's Affiliation



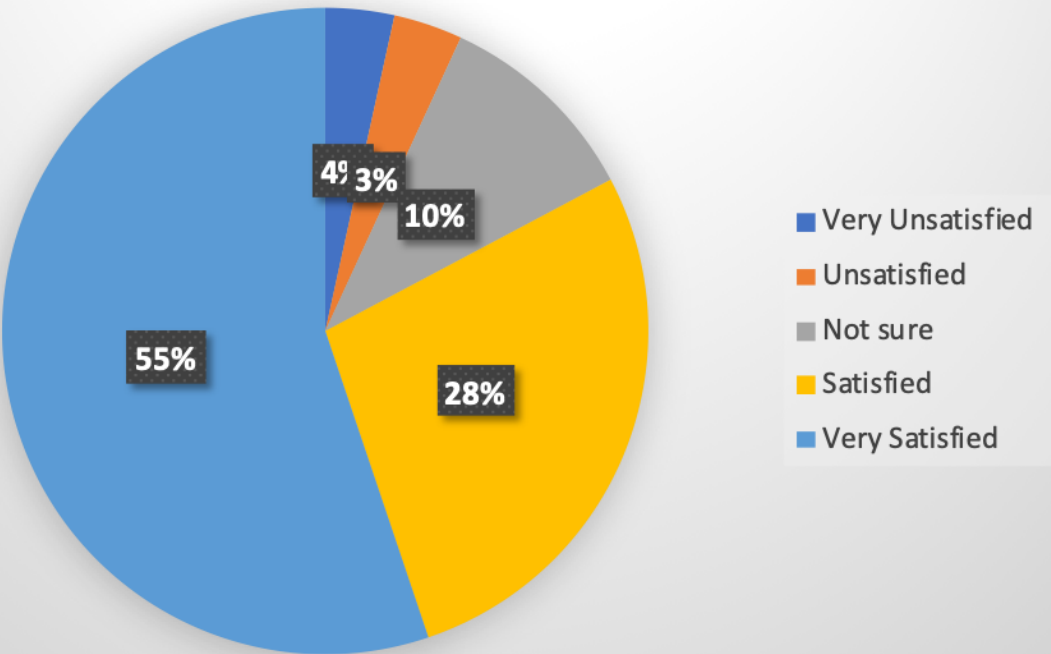
Appropriateness of Theme of Conference



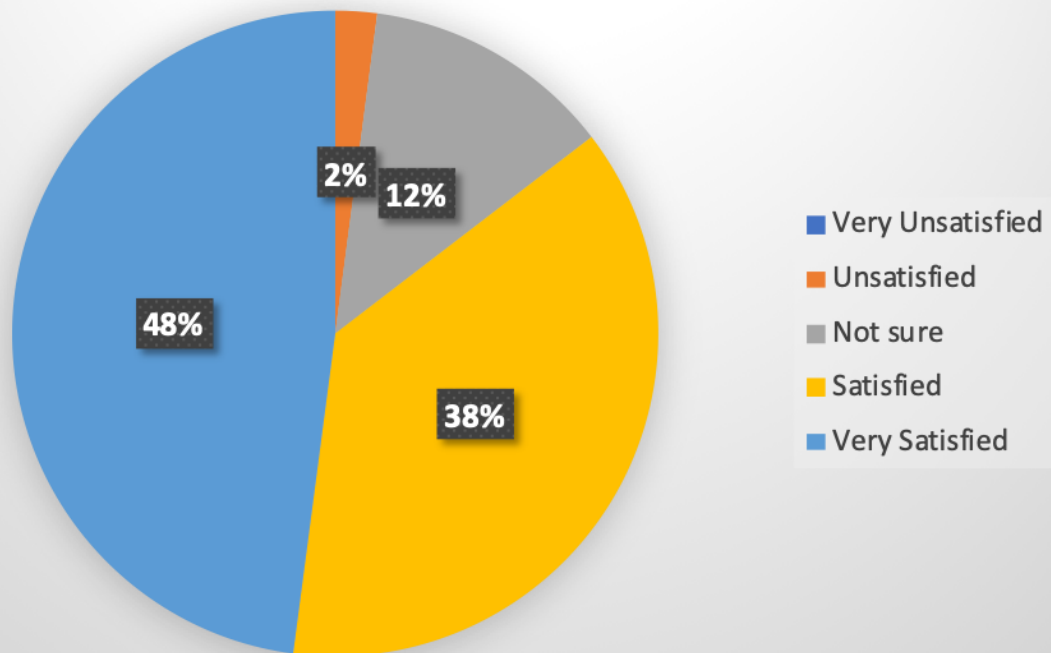
Appropriateness of Speakers



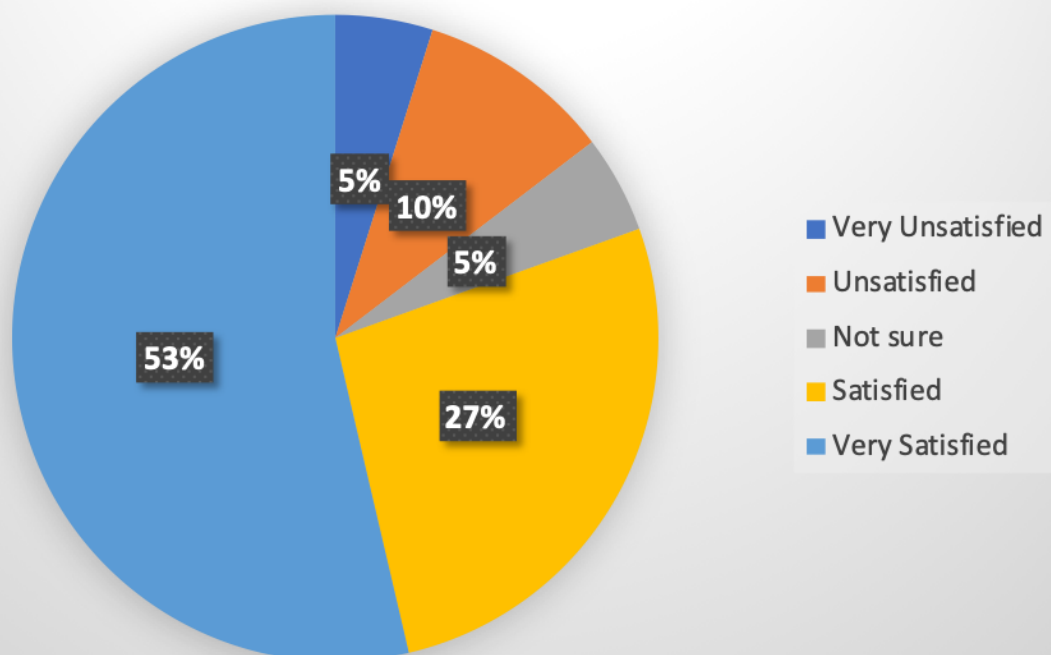
Food



General Organization



Registration for the Conference



APPENDIX 2: "MENTIMETER" RESULTS

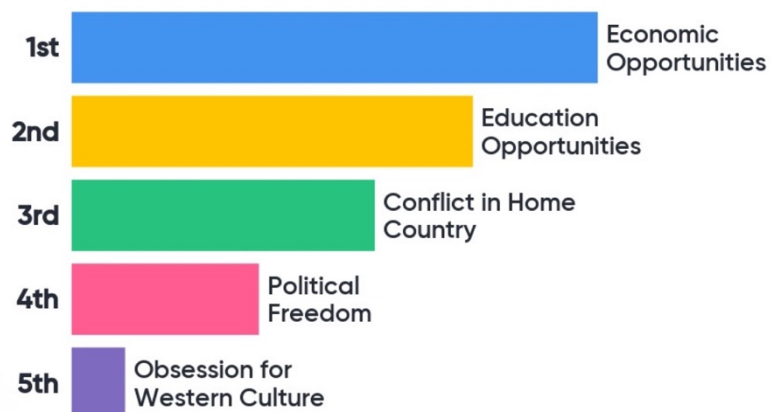
What Nationalities/country do you identify with?

Mentimeter



What do you personally consider a primary driver for migration between Africa and Europe?

Mentimeter



Which of these projects would you consider a priority for API's work in the year 2020?

Mentimeter



Topics for Africa Gala Night Conference in 2020?

Mentimeter

