

The Freedom
African

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE in Africa

VOLUME 2
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A Tool for
**FREEDOM AND
PROSPERITY?**

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Editor's Note

Artificial Intelligence is the double-edged sword we never asked to be handed, and yet here we are, learning to wield it. It promises to make our lives easier, and just as easily, it could undo them. There is no running away from this paradox. For Africans, it cuts even deeper; it becomes existential. Yes, the world is still trying to figure out how AI will reshape the way we think about trade, power, freedoms, privacy, and even our most deeply personal concerns. But Africans are thinking about all of that, plus something else entirely: the familiar fear of being left behind. We often arrive late to the party and get served the crumbs. So, are these even the right questions to be asking right now? Should we simply hold back, let the rest of the world experiment, and figure out what this thing really is before we join in? Should we instead be more afraid of how our own corrupt leaders, and the state institutions they control, might weaponize AI to tighten their grip on our freedoms? Or should we set the fear aside altogether and focus on how transformative AI could be for entrepreneurs across the continent, from street-level hustlers to scaled-up startups? These are live questions we have yet to answer with any conviction.

It is not the first time we have found ourselves at such a consequential crossroads in Africa, asking ourselves questions like these. Do you remember when the internet first arrived on the continent? Tunisia and South Africa were the first to go fully online, adopting the internet protocol suite in 1991, just a decade behind the US and Europe, which connected in the 1980s. Africa was not super late to that party, and the excitement on the continent was real as more countries came online through the 2000s. What apprehension existed centered on the obvious: high costs, an infrastructure deficit, and a shortage of technical expertise to sustain it all. And yet, the internet arguably became the single most consequential innovation of our time. It strengthened the economic power of individual African entrepreneurs and emerged as the most potent weapon ordinary Africans have wielded in the fight against tyranny. But here is the twist: for years now, Africa has been the continent with the fastest-growing number of internet users, while still having the lowest percentage penetration, despite being the second-most populous continent on Earth. Decades of underinvestment in broadband infrastructure, among other failures, left the majority of Africans behind in the race for global connectivity. Simply put: Africa got left behind.

Now, in these early years of AI, we are watching a strikingly similar growth trend unfold. Which leaves one question hanging in the air: will Africa be left behind again?

The numbers, so far, tell an encouraging story. In 2022, TechCabal counted 104 AI startups across Africa. By 2025, that number had nearly doubled to 207, a 99% jump in three years, spanning everything from software development to agriculture, healthcare, and finance. A basic compound annual growth rate calculation using that trajectory suggests that by 2030, we should have at least 650 such startups. Given the sheer enthusiasm among African entrepreneurs and foreign investors, and a global AI boom showing no signs of slowing, that number could just as easily triple and even quadruple.

What is more? The African Development Bank estimated in 2025 that AI could add \$1 trillion to the continent's GDP by 2035. All good news. One cannot help but be optimistic. But not carelessly, though, because optimism should never come at the cost of thinking about everything that could possibly go wrong.

Therefore, African Liberty has identified five issue areas where the conversation about AI in Africa is most urgent: business, education, journalism, law, and public administration. We have invited leading voices in each of these fields to think through, alongside us, about how AI will shape individual freedom and collective prosperity across the continent. Their perspectives are as reassuring as they are unsettling.

Our curiosity, and our cautious optimism, begins on the next page.



***Ibrahim Bàbátúndé
Anóba, Ph.D***
Editor-in-Chief, African Liberty

Artificial Intelligence & Education

How will AI Shape the Future of African Universities?

Insights from a Deputy Vice Chancellor



Professor Ogechi Adeola
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Enterprise, University of Kigali, Rwanda.

Professor Ogechi Adeola is Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Enterprise at the University of Kigali, Rwanda, and is ranked among the world's top 2% scientists in the Stanford-Elsevier Global Ranking (2025). Her interdisciplinary scholarship focuses on strategic marketing, entrepreneurship, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and Africa-centered development.



AI expands economic freedom by equipping young Africans with the tools to create, not just compete for, opportunities. It lowers barriers to entrepreneurship and enables innovation across sectors such as agriculture, finance, and health.

How is AI reshaping higher education in Africa?

AI is redefining higher education in Africa by shifting the focus from content delivery to personalized, adaptive learning and from knowledge consumption to knowledge creation. Beyond the digital transition accelerated by COVID-19, AI is transforming how knowledge is created, assessed, and applied. This shift also challenges traditional notions of authorship, learning, and academic integrity. In my view, the real opportunity lies not merely in adopting AI, but in integrating it in ways that improve quality, expand access, and enhance relevance to Africa's development priorities.

Can AI reduce educational inequality?

AI can reduce educational inequality, but only with intentional access. With the right infrastructure, including connectivity, power, and affordability strategies, it can extend high-quality learning to underserved communities. Without these, it risks deepening existing divides. Equity must therefore remain central, ensuring AI serves as a bridge to opportunity rather than a barrier to inclusion.

What AI innovations are most promising?

The most impactful innovations are those that personalize learning and extend it beyond the classroom. AI tutors, adaptive platforms, and intelligent content systems enable students to learn at their own pace and depth. Tools that support educators also enhance productivity and allow for deeper engagement. Across sectors such as agriculture, finance, and health, AI is already enabling innovation and practical problem-solving. Truly, the value of AI lies in improving how students think, not just what they know.

How does AI enable economic freedom for youth?

AI expands economic freedom by equipping young Africans with the tools to create, not just compete for, opportunities. It lowers barriers to entrepreneurship and enables innovation across sectors such as agriculture, finance, and health. Economic freedom, in this context, is about agency, the ability to make informed choices, solve problems, build enterprises, and generate value independently in both local and global markets.

What role should universities play?

Universities must ensure that AI reflects African realities rather than imported assumptions. It requires embedding African perspectives in data, research, and innovation processes. Without context, AI risks reproducing global biases. Universities must therefore move from passive adoption to active knowledge creation, while strengthening African data ecosystems to ensure ownership, representation, and relevance.

How can AI be adopted without undermining critical thinking?

AI should be positioned as a tool for augmentation, not replacement. Institutions must emphasize ethical use, critical engagement, and originality in assessment. When used effectively, AI can strengthen intellectual independence by enabling deeper analysis and reflection rather than superficial learning.

What policies are needed? And how can African universities move from consuming to building AI?

Effective AI integration requires clear, balanced policies at both the national and institutional levels. These should address ethics, data governance, and academic integrity, while promoting

transparency and proper attribution. Importantly, policies must enable innovation rather than constrain it. Africa also has an opportunity to lead in developing responsible, inclusive AI frameworks grounded in global standards and African values of community, responsibility, and inclusion. This transition requires sustained investment in capacity, research, and collaboration. Governments and higher education institutions must support AI labs and Centers of Excellence, while strengthening partnerships with industry, research institutes, and global networks. In Rwanda, there is growing momentum through innovation hubs, forward-looking digital policy frameworks, and university-led initiatives that can serve as catalysts for AI development. Building AI ecosystems is a long-term, interdisciplinary effort that integrates technology, policy, business, and the social sciences.

What should an AI-enabled African education system look like by 2035?

By 2035, Africa should have an inclusive, innovation-driven education system where AI is seamlessly integrated into teaching and research.

More importantly, the continent should not only participate in global AI conversations but also actively shape them through innovation, policy leadership, and context-driven solutions. Achieving this will require sustained investment, curriculum reform, and strong cross-sector collaboration starting now.

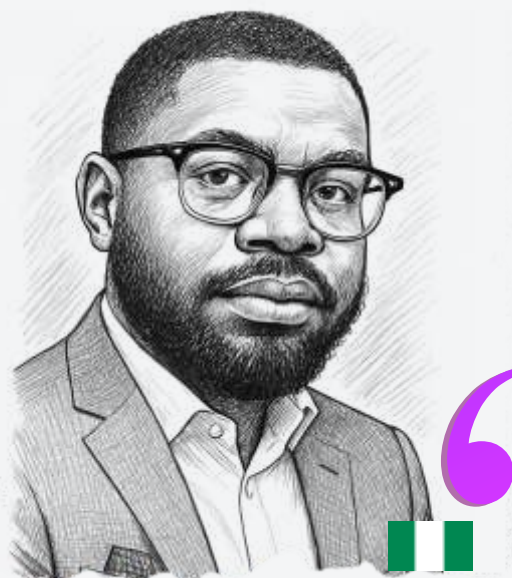
Any advice to young Africans?

Be bold and intentional. Build strong digital and analytical skills, but also think critically and creatively. Do not simply use AI, learn to shape it. Africa's future will be defined by those who can translate technology into solutions for real societal challenges.



IMAGE CREDIT: MAXX SAS

How Artificial Intelligence *Can* Leapfrog Africa's Science Gap



Dr. Muneer Yaqub received his PhD in Molecular and Cell Biology from The University of Texas at Dallas, where his dissertation applied machine learning approaches to investigate antibiotic resistance and improve treatment in infectious diseases. He is a Postdoctoral scholar at Stanford University.

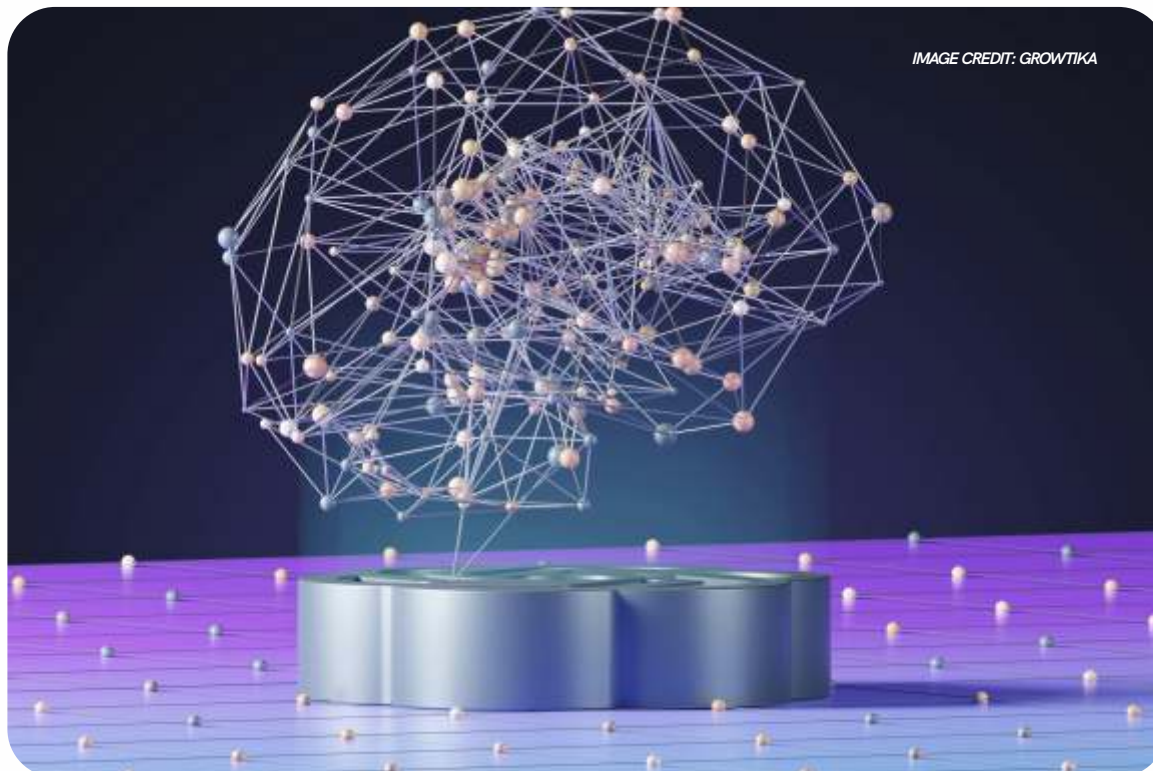
The global gap in scientific output has never been fundamentally about talent. It has always been about access to opportunity and the freedom to experiment repeatedly without catastrophic consequences for failure.

Dr. Muneer Yaqub
Stanford University

Imagine you are a student in a microbiology class at a prestigious African university. There are 300 students in your year, but your department only owns two microscopes. To learn how to identify a virus or a cell, you wait in a long line just to get a five-second look through a lens. If the power goes out, which it often does, the lesson stops. By the time you graduate, you may know all the theories in your textbook, but you have never actually run an experiment yourself. You are a scientist in name only.

For decades, we have tried to fix this by waiting for governments to build more labs. The logic was simple: if we build the rooms and buy the equipment, the scientists will follow. But building labs is slow and expensive. While we wait for brick-and-mortar infrastructure, millions of brilliant young people are losing the opportunity to innovate. Right now, Africa accounts for 15% of the world's population but produces only about 2% of global research output. This is not because African students lack intelligence or ambition. It is because they lack access to practice. In many underfunded institutions, even small mistakes carry major consequences. A broken beaker, a contaminated culture, or wasted reagents can consume a department's limited budget. As a result, students are taught to avoid mistakes rather than experiment freely. Discovery suffers because science is not learned by memorization alone; it is learned through repetition, failure, troubleshooting, and trying again. To prepare the next generation of innovators, we must stop waiting only for buildings and start using Artificial Intelligence to bring scientific training directly to students.

The biggest secret to becoming a strong scientist is repetition. You have to perform a process repeatedly before you truly understand it. Students in wealthier countries accumulate thousands of hours of practical experience before entering advanced research environments. Many African students receive only fragments of that exposure. This situation creates a major gap, not in intellectual potential, but in practical familiarity. Artificial Intelligence can help close that gap. We do not need a government construction project to place a smartphone or laptop in a student's hands. AI-powered simulations can give students access to personalized virtual laboratories where they can repeatedly practice scientific workflows at little or no cost.



Universities Should Use Virtual Labs to Give Students a Safe Place to Practice

The first step is to rethink how science is taught. Instead of treating physical laboratories as the only entry point into experimentation, universities should integrate virtual laboratories into undergraduate education. AI-driven simulation platforms already allow students to practice gene editing, chemical reactions, molecular analysis, microscopy workflows, and data interpretation in interactive digital environments. These systems increasingly resemble real laboratory processes. The greatest advantage of virtual learning environments is that failure becomes inexpensive. If a student makes a mistake during a simulation, nothing is wasted. They simply reset the exercise and try again. That ability to repeat an experiment multiple times without financial consequences is transformative in resource-constrained environments.

Virtual laboratories are not substitutes for physical laboratories. They are preparation tools. Pilots use flight simulators before operating real aircraft; science students can do the same before entering advanced laboratories. By the time a student eventually gains access to a real facility, they already understand the workflow, the logic behind the procedure, and the common errors to avoid. Limited physical laboratory time becomes far more productive because students arrive prepared. Most importantly, this approach shifts power back to student curiosity. Learning is no longer restricted to the rare moment when equipment becomes available. A student can practice repeatedly on their own schedule rather than depending on scarce institutional resources.

Private Sector Collaboration Can Turn Internet Access into Scientific Infrastructure

Digital science education cannot function without reliable internet access. In many parts of Africa, the cost of mobile data is a barrier to learning. Students are often forced to choose between paying for internet access and covering basic daily needs. Governments and telecommunications companies should therefore treat access to scientific and educational platforms as part of the national educational infrastructure. One practical solution is zero-rated access to accredited scientific and educational websites, where students can use specific platforms without consuming mobile data. Similar approaches were adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic to support remote learning. The same model can be extended to scientific education and AI-powered training platforms.

At the same time, African countries should rethink how they invest in physical laboratories. Rather than attempting to build and maintain poorly equipped facilities at every institution, governments and universities could establish centralized regional research hubs with world-class equipment. Students could complete most of their training virtually and then use these hubs for intensive hands-on validation and advanced experimentation. This model would stretch limited resources further while allowing far more students to access meaningful scientific training.

Transforming Teachers into Coaches Will Allow Scientific Mastery to Scale

Technology alone will not solve the problem. The role of the educator must evolve as well. In overcrowded classrooms with limited resources, professors are often forced to act as fact distributors. Students memorize information because there is little room for inquiry-driven learning. AI changes that dynamic. With tools such as ChatGPT and specialized scientific assistants, students can receive immediate feedback while practicing scientific reasoning independently. If an experiment fails late at night, a student no longer has to wait a week to ask why. They can troubleshoot the issue immediately, revise their thinking, and try again. This access allows educators to focus less on reciting information and more on mentoring students through problem-solving, creativity, and scientific inquiry.

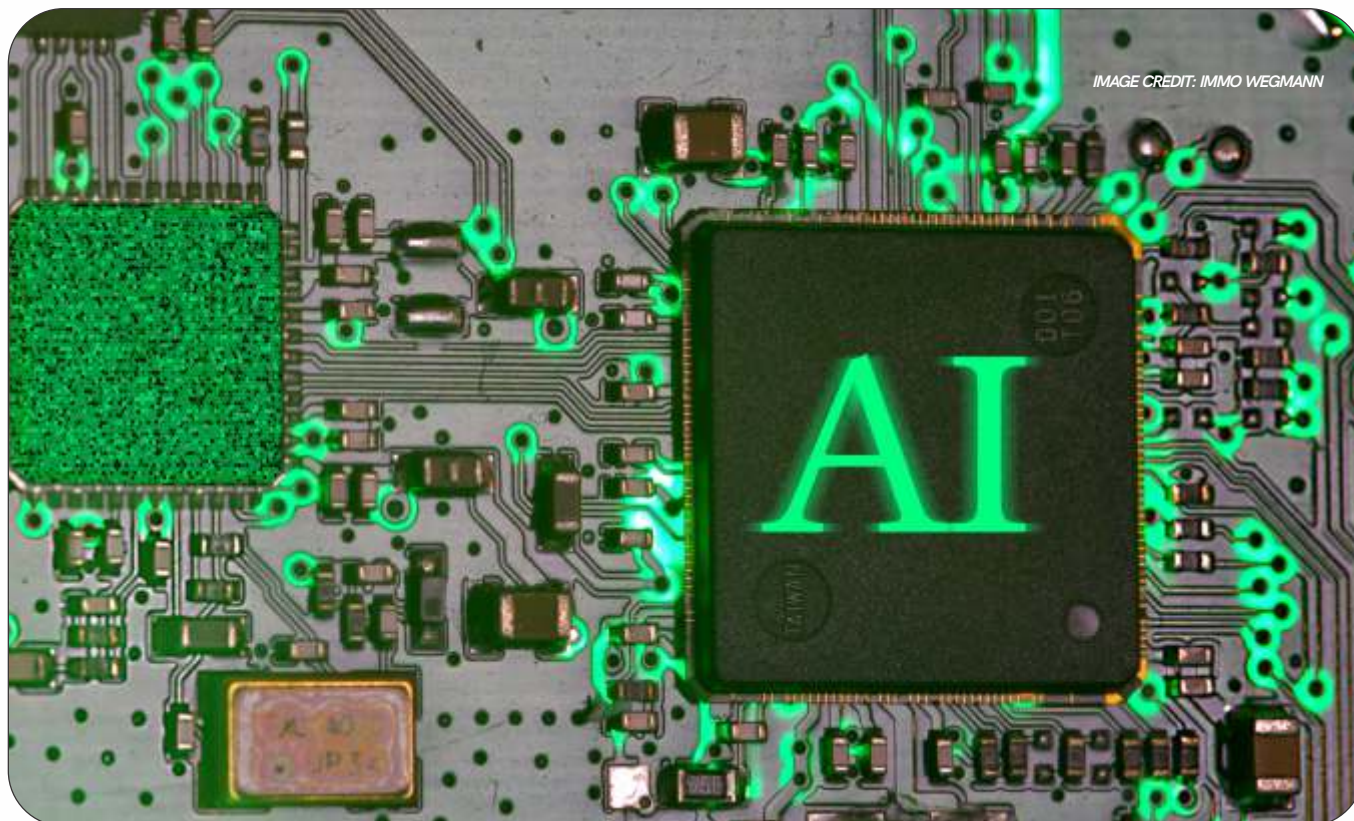
Africa should also prioritize AI systems trained on local scientific challenges and datasets.

African scientists should be using AI to study African crop diseases, endemic pathogens, antimicrobial resistance patterns, climate-linked outbreaks, and indigenous medicinal compounds. If scientific AI systems are built entirely on foreign datasets and priorities, Africa risks remaining dependent on imported scientific agendas rather than shaping its own.

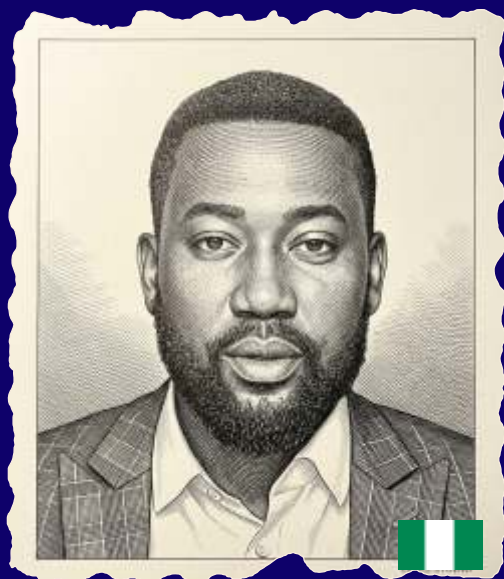
Africa Can Leapfrog the Traditional Model of Scientific Training

The global gap in scientific output has never been fundamentally about talent. It has always been about access to opportunity and the freedom to experiment repeatedly without catastrophic consequences for failure. In traditional laboratories, failure is expensive. In digital simulations, failure becomes part of the learning process. By embracing AI-driven education, subsidized connectivity, virtual laboratories, and hybrid research infrastructure, African countries do not need to wait decades to participate meaningfully in global science. They can accelerate scientific training now.

We need the political will to place powerful digital tools into students' hands. The laboratory of the future is no longer confined to four walls. Increasingly, it is a digital space where any student with curiosity, ambition, and an internet connection can afford to fail long enough to succeed eventually.



AI *And* Perspective from the African Union



Chigozie Emmanuel Okonkwo
African Union

Chigozie Emmanuel Okonkwo is an international development professional and Education and Skills Advisor at the African Union Commission, specializing in education policy, Digital Education Transformation, TVET reforms, qualifications frameworks, and skills mobility across Africa.

“My core mission is to ensure that, as the world rapidly digitizes, African youth are empowered not just as consumers of technology, but as creators, innovators, and leaders in the global knowledge economy.”

Who is Chigozie Emmanuel Okonkwo?

Thank you for having me. I am Chigozie Emmanuel Okonkwo, an international development professional and currently an Education and Skills Advisor at the African Union Commission's Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI). My work focuses on education policy, particularly advancing Africa's digital transformation in education and skills development. I am closely involved in shaping and implementing key continental frameworks, including the AU Digital Education Strategy (2023-2028), the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2026-2035), and the Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy. My core mission is to ensure that, as the world rapidly digitizes, African youth are empowered not just as consumers of technology, but as creators, innovators, and leaders in the global knowledge economy. I also support the African Union's work on TVET systems reform and labor mobility across the continent. Over the years, I have contributed to the development of the African Continental TVET Strategy (CTVET 2025-2034) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), and have also provided technical assistance to the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) program. My academic background, including a master's in Comparative Education with a focus on student mobility and regional integration, provides the foundation for my commitment to building an integrated, prosperous Africa.

What risks and opportunities does AI pose to equity in education systems across Africa?

The opportunities are immense, but so are the risks. On the opportunity side, AI has the potential to democratize access to high-quality, personalized learning. It can help bridge the teacher shortage gap through intelligent tutoring systems, assist educators with administrative burdens, and provide tailored learning pathways for students, which is critical for TVET and skills development. However, the risks to equity are severe. As highlighted in the AU's Continental AI Strategy, we face a looming "AI divide." Currently, only about 53% of young Africans use the internet. If we deploy AI without first solving the foundational issues of universal and meaningful connectivity and device access, we will only accelerate the learning outcomes of the already privileged, leaving rural and marginalized students further behind. Moreover, there is the risk of cultural and gender bias. If AI systems are trained exclusively on imported data, they will not reflect African realities or languages, and they risk perpetuating existing inequalities. In that sense, digital sovereignty must be at the core of discussions such as this.

Should Africa prioritize AI-driven education models over traditional education models?

It is not a matter of choosing one over the other; it is about integration and evolution. Having worked as a classroom teacher myself and with Higher Education stakeholders extensively within the framework of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) Higher Education Cluster, we cannot afford to abandon the foundational elements of traditional education. We still need well-trained teachers, safe physical learning spaces, and strong community engagement. However, traditional models alone are no longer sufficient to prepare our youth for the 21st-century labor market. As outlined in CESA 2026-2035, digitalization and AI are essential tools for dealing with broad educational challenges. We must prioritize a blended approach where AI enhances traditional models. For instance, AI should not replace the teacher. Rather, we should invest in Teacher Capacity and Digital Pedagogy, as mandated by the Africa Teachers Digital Literacy Frameworks, so that educators can use AI to deliver more effective, curriculum-aligned instruction. A concrete example of this in action is the Innovating Education in Africa (IEA) program, where we identify and support homegrown solutions that integrate technology into local contexts, ensuring that innovation supports, rather than replaces, the essential human element of education.

How can AI education policy balance innovation with freedom and accountability?

Balancing these elements requires comprehensive national digital education policies that are intentionally designed, rather than reactive. Innovation thrives when there is an enabling environment, such as the innovation hubs and EdTech startup incentives promoted by the AU Digital Education Strategy. That said, freedom to innovate must be tethered to.

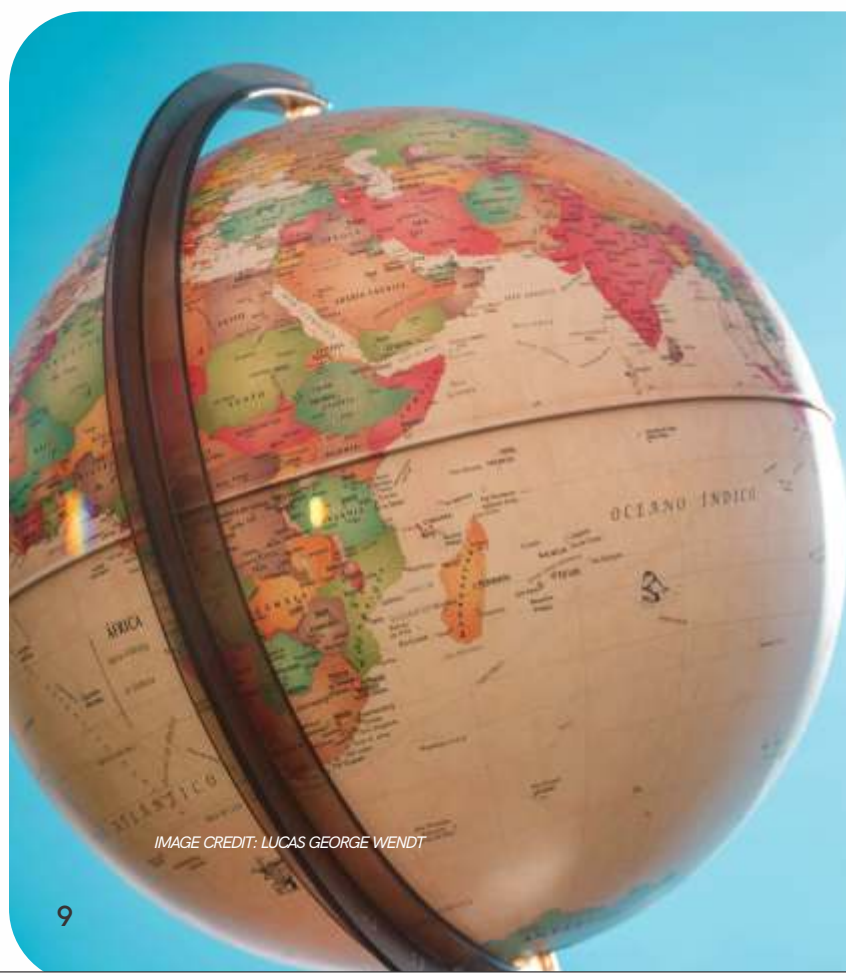


IMAGE CREDIT: LUCAS GEORGE WENDT

What role should the AU play in setting AI education standards across member states?

The AU's role is to provide the strategic blueprint, facilitate coordination, and establish baseline standards that ensure interoperability and equity across the continent, much like the work we do with the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). Through frameworks like STISA 2034 and the Continental AI Strategy, the AU sets the overarching vision: an integrated, prosperous Africa driven by competitive Science, Technology, and Innovation. Specifically for AI in education, the AU plays a critical role in developing common frameworks, such as the Africa Teachers Digital Literacy, Skills, and Certification Frameworks. We also serve as a convening power. A prime example is the IEA Expo, which serves as a structured policy dialogue platform. It supports member states in aligning their National Digital Education, AI, and Robotics strategies with continental standards such as CTNET-34 and STISA-2034, ensuring the coherence and mobility of skills across borders.

What lessons from UNESCO and EU partnerships apply to Africa's AI skills agenda?

A key lesson from our international partnerships—similar to what I observed in my co-authored journal article titled "The Dragon's Deal: Educational Development and Knowledge Sharing in China-Africa Cooperation"—is the importance of knowledge sharing while maintaining a human-centric approach. The EU's focus on ethical AI and robust regulatory frameworks teaches us that innovation must be governed by rules that protect citizens' rights. Similarly, UNESCO's emphasis on AI for sustainable development and digital inclusion aligns perfectly with our goals. However, the most crucial lesson is that partnerships must be contextualized. We cannot simply import EU or UNESCO models wholesale. As we build our AI skills agenda, we must ensure that international cooperation supports African countries in actively shaping and enforcing AI governance frameworks that reflect our unique socio-economic realities, languages, and cultural values. This is why the IEA program focuses on African-built solutions that are fit for context and can be scaled sustainably.

Beyond education, can AI close Africa's skills gap at scale?

Yes, but only if it is deeply integrated with our labor market strategies. Having supported the development of the African Continental TVET Strategy (2025-2034), I can attest to the critical skills mismatch between graduates and industry needs. AI can close this gap at scale by enabling dynamic skills anticipation and forecasting. AI-driven platforms can analyze labor market trends in real time, enabling TVET institutions and universities to rapidly adjust their curricula to meet employer demands. Furthermore, AI itself is a new sector for employment.

By building capabilities in frontier technologies—a core priority of STISA 2034—we can create entirely new industries and jobs for African youth in data annotation, algorithm development, and AI system maintenance. This endeavor directly supports initiatives like the Joint Labour Migration Program by enhancing the portability and relevance of these new digital skills across borders. We are seeing this transition firsthand through IEA-supported innovations in robotics and AI-integrated TVET training models.

How can African governments ensure that the use of AI and new technology empowers youth and builds prosperity?

Governments must shift their mindset from viewing youth as passive consumers of technology to empowering them as active creators. It requires intentional policy actions. First, as mandated by STISA 2034, we must increase investments in STEM and TVET education, with a particular focus on women and youth. Second, governments must create an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship. This means providing seed funding, tax incentives, and establishing innovation hubs where young Africans can build AI solutions tailored to local challenges. The IEA program is a catalyst for this, having reached over 1,000,000 beneficiaries and provided financial support to 41 innovations to date. Finally, we must ensure that youth have a seat at the table in policy discussions. When we say "youth shaping the digital future," it means their lived experiences must directly inform the governance and deployment of these technologies.

IMAGE CREDIT: SOLEN FEYSSA

***What partnerships are key to scaling AI education and skills across Africa?***

Scaling AI education requires robust public-private partnerships, as governments alone cannot shoulder the immense infrastructure and capacity costs. Based on the AU's Investment Roadmap and my experience with international partnerships, four types are critical: (i) Infrastructure & Compute Co-Investment: Partnerships with telcos and cloud providers to expand broadband and establish local data centers. (ii) Device & Technology Access Schemes: Collaborations with manufacturers and financial institutions to make devices affordable. (iii) Industry-Aligned Content Alliances: Working with EdTech startups to develop curriculum-aligned, culturally relevant AI learning materials. (iv) Capacity Building & AI Talent Coalitions: Joint initiatives with global tech firms and local NGOs to train educators and cultivate specialized AI talent pools. The IEA program actively promotes this "Triple Helix" collaboration among governments, academia, and industry to accelerate the commercialization and scaling of high-impact innovations.

Any other thoughts or last words regarding AI use for education and empowerment?

My final thought is a call for urgency and intentionality. The digital revolution is not waiting for Africa to catch up. As I argue in another paper titled "The Challenges, Pragmatic Justification and More Effective Ways of Implementing the Continental Education Strategy for Africa," I know the hurdles we face, but also the absolute necessity of pushing forward. If we do not actively shape how AI is deployed in our education and TVET systems, we risk deepening existing divides. However, if we align our efforts, grounded in frameworks like the Digital Education Strategy, CESA 2026-2035, STISA 2034, and the Continental AI Strategy, we have a historic opportunity. We can leapfrog legacy systems, provide world-class education and skills training to every African youth, and transition our continent into a leading force in the global knowledge economy. The time for pilot projects is over; it is time for systemic, continent-wide implementation.

Artificial Intelligence & Journalism

AI and the Issue of Enhanced Efficiency in Modern Journalism in Africa



Finic Oluoch
*Multimedia Journalist with
Standard Media Group*

A Kenyan journalist and media professional with a wealth of experience in news reporting, television production, and digital storytelling. He works with Standard Media Group in broadcast operations and news production.

Artificial Intelligence is steadily transforming modern journalism by improving efficiency, enhancing accuracy, and enabling faster storytelling across print, broadcast, and digital platforms. In today's fast-paced media environment, speed and credibility are essential, and AI has become an important tool in helping journalists meet these demands without compromising quality. As a multimedia journalist working in a bilingual media landscape such as Kenya's, AI has significantly improved newsroom workflows and productivity. Kenyan newsrooms often operate in both Swahili and English, with Swahili bulletins airing earlier in the evening before English prime-time broadcasts. Traditionally, this required journalists to rewrite and repackage the same story twice within very limited timelines. Today, AI-powered tools can assist in translating scripts, restructuring stories, and refining language within seconds, allowing journalists to focus more on editorial judgment, storytelling, and verification.

Beyond translation and scripting, AI has enhanced research and fact-checking processes. When used responsibly, AI can help journalists quickly verify information, analyze large volumes of data, and monitor developing stories in real time, contributing to more accurate and informed reporting, especially during breaking news situations. However, AI also presents significant ethical and professional challenges. The rise of misinformation and deepfake technology threatens public trust in journalism by manipulating audio, video, and images. Journalists must therefore remain vigilant and uphold the principles of verification, fairness, and accountability. Overreliance on AI also risks diminishing human creativity and editorial intuition. Journalism is fundamentally a human profession built on empathy, critical thinking, and ethical decision making; qualities that technology cannot fully replicate. AI should be viewed as a tool to support journalists, not replace them. When combined with strong editorial standards and human oversight, AI has the potential to make journalism faster, smarter, and more accessible, while preserving the integrity and creativity that define the profession.

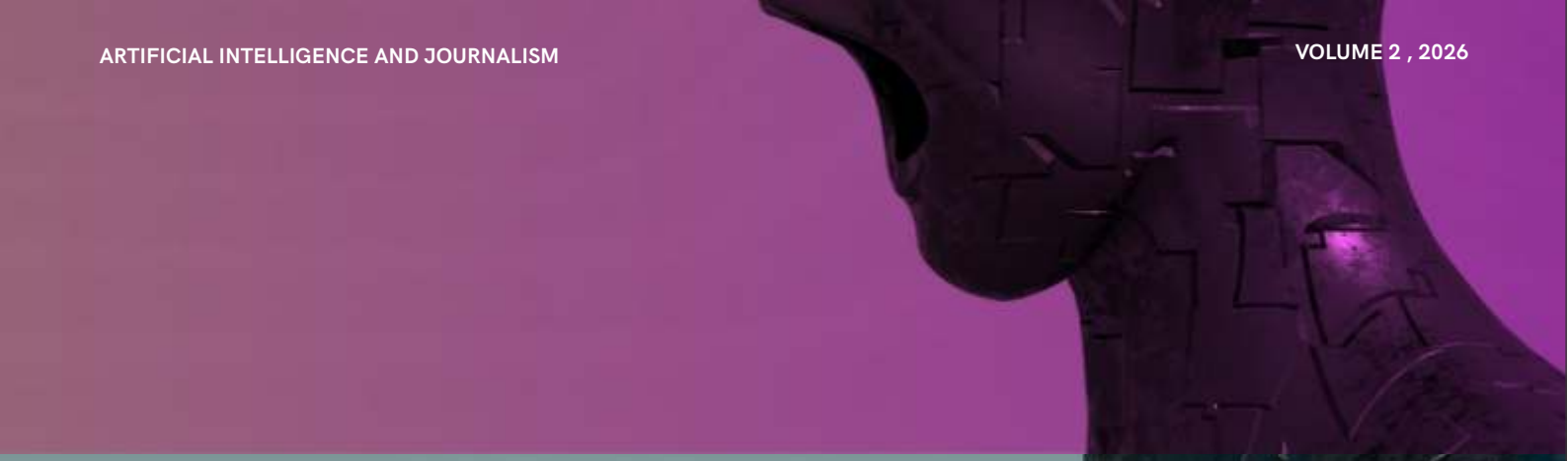


IMAGE CREDIT: STEVE A. JOHNSON



African Journalism in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

IMAGE CREDIT: D Z



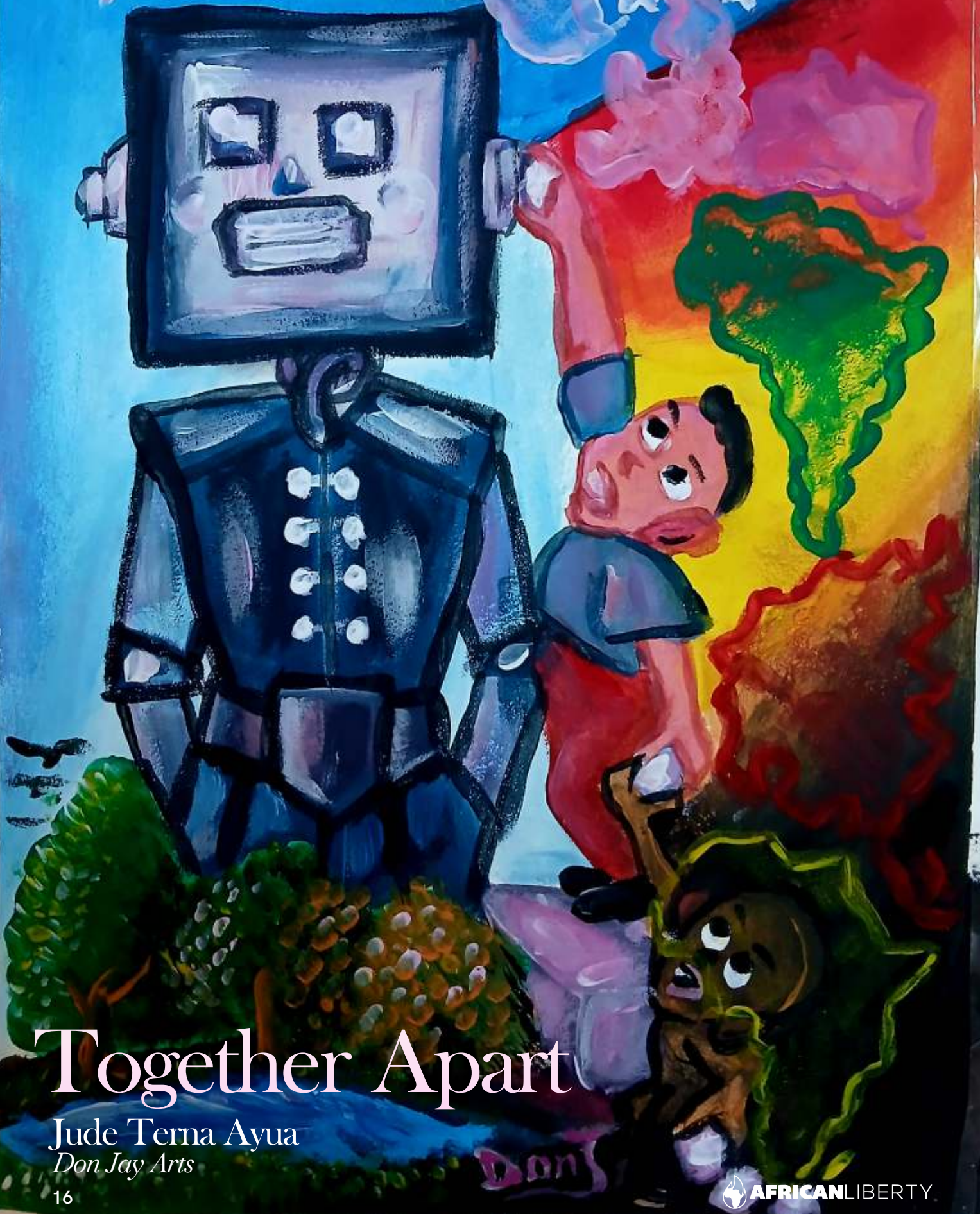
Blessed K. Sogah
*Broadcast journalist and
television anchor at JoyNews*

***Blessed Sogah** is a broadcast journalist with a career spanning more than a decade. He's also a researcher into frontier technology-driven geopolitics*

Academia is replete with research on how digital technology creates a platform where native information or knowledge, unlike in the past, may now be organized, preserved, and shared on a global scale. Artificial Intelligence, specifically generative AI, presents journalists with that unique opportunity. By optimally leveraging the platform, African content producers can effectively reach global audiences with speed and precision, devoid of transmission or broadcast hurdles that historically made permeating the global Information market unfeasible. Artificial Intelligence is, in no doubt, hungry for data and information flows to achieve its computational objectives regarding narrative framing and logical reasoning. Media outlets in Africa, thanks to the role of their journalists over the years, have been the source of information, presumptively guaranteeing some level of ethical or professional production of content. The media outlets still perform these roles, with some mainstream outlets incorporating AI-enabled bots in their content generation.

However, a nuanced challenge is equally emerging in the wake of the digital age, particularly with Artificial Intelligence—the fact that Artificial Intelligence is also creating an overwhelming web of intermediaries in the information dissemination structure, even beyond the sphere of journalists. These actors may end up churning out inaccurate content, resulting in disinformation or misinformation. Therefore, the clarion call must be made to the African journalist: Until the Lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter. Journalists in Africa, now more than ever, must not renege on their duty of dominating the information landscape with verifiable, fact-checked information in order to prevent the distortion of Africa's narrative and story. Undoubtedly, by doing so, we live up to the true essence of our role of being the fourth Estate and the bastion of liberty.

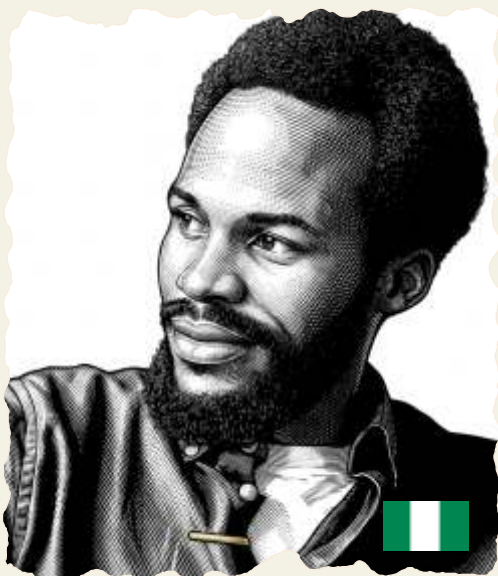
Together
APART



Together Apart

Jude Terna Ayua
Don Jay Arts





Jude Terna Ayua is a multidimensional visual artist. Jude's expertise includes pencil drawing, painting, sculpture, and graphic design. As a multi-talented creative individual, Jude uses his artwork to tell stories of injustice, focusing on Africa. Aside from being an artist, Jude is also a professional writer, a lawyer, and a poet. Jude is from Nigeria and currently lives in the United Kingdom.

Jude Terna Ayua

Don Jay Arts

About the Work

"Together Apart" is a two-dimensional artwork that represents the unequal technological advancement among continents. The artwork ranks continents, placing Africa at the bottom and North America at the top. In the artwork, the African region is dark, signifying that it contributes the resources for technological development at the expense of its environmental, personal, and public health and safety. The darkness fades as it progresses upwards across other continents. Conversely, the brightness dims downwards, signifying the benefits that different regions enjoy from technological advancement. Including artificial intelligence, Africa is a major hub for data mining, but it does not enjoy the financial benefits that accrue from it. Thus, continents build "together" but enjoy "apart."

Concept and Philosophy

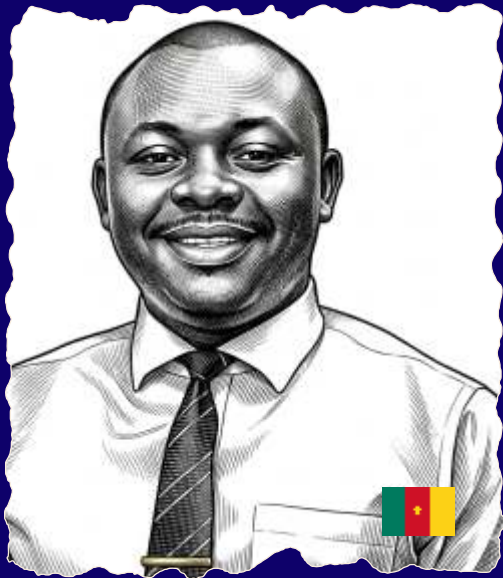
The piece illustrates the concept of economic inequality among world regions. World powers exploit underdeveloped and developing countries by mining their resources for their own benefit, without adequately compensating the countries for the exploitation. Such an undue advantage keeps the exploited countries perpetually underdeveloped while others continue to develop.

Medium and Process

The medium for "Together Apart" is pastel on paper. The process of its creation was entirely human and purely imaginative, without any artificial input. It took about four hours to create the artwork. Although the piece is transmitted digitally for publication, the original remains with the artist who created it.

The Big Responsibility in the Hands of *Journalists*

A Take from Cameroon



Amindeh
Blaise Atabong

Journalists must be protected from arbitrary surveillance, because a free press is essential to democracy. Without safeguards, AI risks becoming a weapon of repression rather than a tool for security.



Could you introduce yourself and describe how your journalism intersects with technology and AI in Africa?

I am Amindeh Blaise Atabong, a journalist based in Cameroon's capital, Yaounde, with over 15 years of experience across print, radio, and online media. I have worked largely in Cameroon in both staff and freelance roles, reporting on technology, politics, conflict, global development, and broader African issues. My journalism intersects with technology and AI in the way I gather, process, and disseminate information, while also scrutinizing digital surveillance and the growing influence of emerging tools in shaping narratives.

How is AI reshaping the African media and information landscape, from your experience as a journalist?

From my experience, AI is reshaping African media by automating news production, improving efficiency, enhancing audience engagement, and enabling data-driven reporting. For example, voice-recorded interviews that once took hours to painstakingly transcribe can now be processed in seconds using AI tools like Otter.ai or Sonix. These innovations free up journalists to focus on analysis and storytelling. Yet, AI also introduces risks—disinformation, algorithmic bias, and surveillance. The challenge is ensuring African-led safeguards so that AI strengthens, rather than undermines, our media landscape.

Have you witnessed AI or digital surveillance being used to monitor or suppress journalists in Cameroon?

Yes. AI-driven social media monitoring has also been deployed to suppress dissenting voices, raising serious concerns about freedom of expression and press independence. The 2017 internet blackout in Cameroon's English-speaking regions was a precursor to today's AI-enabled information control. It demonstrated how governments can weaponize technology to silence dissent. With AI, such control has become more sophisticated, harder to detect, and potentially more damaging to democratic discourse.

Can AI improve early warning systems in conflict zones, or does it risk misuse by armed actors?

AI can strengthen early warning systems by analyzing social media chatter, satellite imagery, and local reports to predict violence. However, these same tools can be misused by armed actors for propaganda or targeting civilians.

How can AI help or hinder accountability journalism in fragile, conflict-affected states like the Central African Republic?

In fragile states like the Central African Republic, AI can help journalists process large datasets on human rights abuses. But if controlled by governments or militias, it risks distorting narratives and obstructing transparency. In Cameroon, AI tools proved invaluable in 2018 when BBC Africa Eye verified a horrifying video showing soldiers executing two women and two children. The government had dismissed the footage as 'fake news,' but forensic analysis established the location, timing, and perpetrators—underscoring AI's potential to bolster accountability journalism.

How could AI-powered disinformation affect elections and public discourse in politically tense countries like Cameroon?

AI-powered disinformation campaigns can flood social media with fake news, eroding trust in institutions and polarizing voters. In Cameroon's tense political climate, this could destabilize public discourse. I remember that before the 2018 presidential election, the government even appealed to Meta to help combat fake news and hate speech on its platform, Facebook—a sign of how seriously disinformation threatens democratic processes.



IMAGE CREDIT: CELINE YLMZ



IMAGE CREDIT: JOSHUA HANSON

Where should the line be drawn between government use of AI for security and protecting press freedom?

Governments may argue that AI is essential for national security, but the line must be drawn where it infringes on press freedom and civil liberties. Governments should use AI in proportion to real threats, with transparency and independent oversight. Journalists must be protected from arbitrary surveillance, because a free press is essential to democracy. Without safeguards, AI risks becoming a weapon of repression rather than a tool for security.

What safeguards are needed to prevent African governments from weaponizing AI against their own citizens?

We need robust legal frameworks, independent oversight mechanisms, and transparency requirements. Civil society and journalists must be actively involved in shaping these safeguards to ensure accountability and protect democratic freedoms.

What would you say to young African journalists about using AI as a tool for accountability and freedom?

My advice to young African journalists is to use AI ethically as a tool, not a crutch. Leverage it for fact-checking, data analysis, and amplifying accountability, but remain vigilant about its biases and limitations. Above all, remember that journalism's true power lies in human judgment, courage, and integrity—qualities no algorithm can possess.

What about *Journalism*?

AI Itself Is Not the Problem, THE ISSUE IS HOW IT IS USED



Mimi Mefo Newuh

Founder of MMI News; Host at DW News

“Security cannot become a blanket justification for mass surveillance or the suppression of dissent. The line should be drawn at transparency, proportionality, and accountability.”

Could you briefly introduce yourself and describe how your journalism intersects with AI and technology in Africa?

I am Mimi Mefo Newuh, a Cameroonian journalist and founder of MMI News, an independent digital media platform focused on public interest journalism. My work intersects with technology every day because digital platforms have become central to how journalism is produced, distributed, and consumed. Technology has fundamentally reshaped independent journalism in Africa today.

As the founder of Mimi Mefo Info, how has technology shaped your ability to report on Cameroon?

Technology has made independent journalism quite possible. Digital technology allowed us to bypass many of those barriers and reach audiences directly. Mobile phones, encrypted communication tools, cloud-based collaboration, and social media platforms have enabled citizens from remote communities to share information, videos, and testimonies in real time. This has been particularly important in conflict-affected regions where access to information is difficult. At the same time, technology has created new vulnerabilities. Journalists now face cyber harassment, surveillance, misinformation attacks, and coordinated digital intimidation campaigns.

Have you witnessed AI or digital tools being weaponized against journalists covering the Anglophone Crisis?

Yes. Even before the widespread use of generative AI, digital tools were already being used to monitor, intimidate, and discredit journalists covering sensitive issues like the Anglophone Crisis. Today, AI has made this even more concerning. Manipulated videos, fake screenshots, impersonation accounts, and coordinated misinformation campaigns can spread rapidly online.

How does AI-powered content surveillance threaten press freedom in Africa today?

AI-powered surveillance creates the possibility for governments and powerful actors to monitor journalists, activists, and citizens on an unprecedented scale. The concern is that many African countries are adopting digital surveillance technologies faster than they are developing independent oversight mechanisms. Without transparency and legal protections, these systems can become tools for suppressing dissent rather than protecting public safety.

How is AI-driven disinformation affecting conflict reporting and public trust in media across Cameroon and Africa?

AI-driven disinformation is becoming one of the greatest threats to public trust in journalism. In conflict environments, false information spreads quickly because emotions are already high and audiences are desperate for updates. Deepfakes, AI-generated images, fabricated audio recordings, and manipulated narratives can distort public understanding of events.

Can AI be a practical tool for journalists to counter state-sponsored propaganda and disinformation in Africa?

Absolutely. AI itself is not the problem. The issue is how it is used. AI can help journalists verify content more efficiently, detect manipulated images and videos, analyse large volumes of data, identify coordinated disinformation networks, and improve investigative reporting.

However, journalists must use AI responsibly and maintain strong editorial oversight. AI should support journalism, not replace human judgment, ethics, and verification.

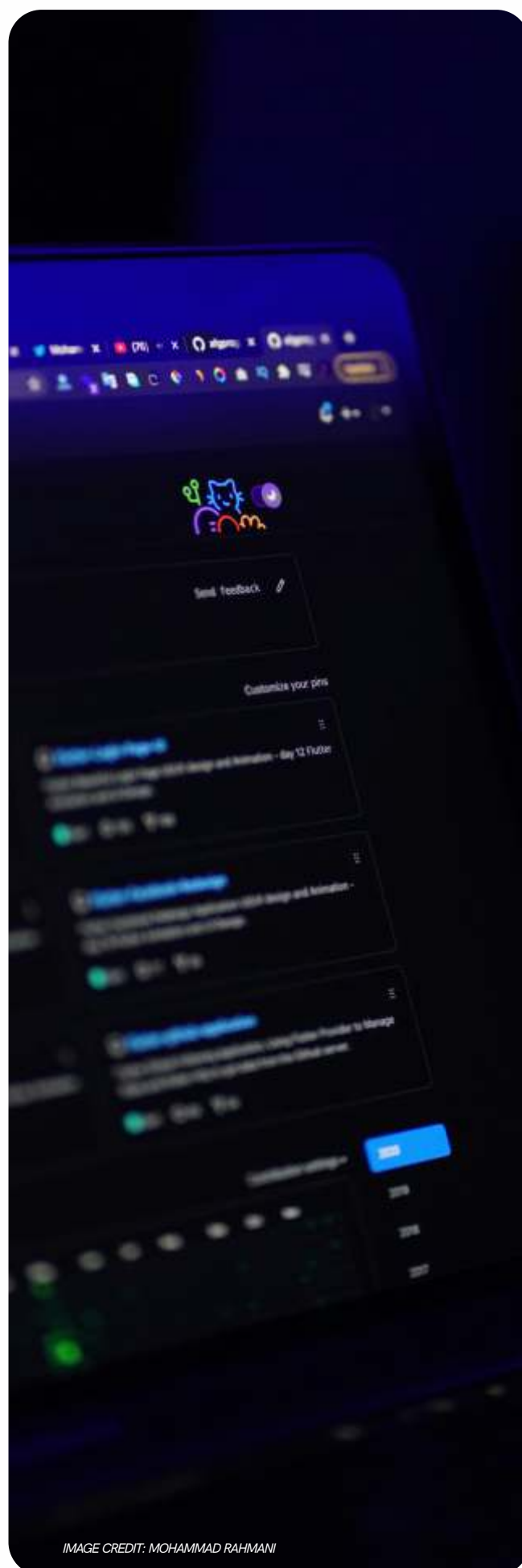


IMAGE CREDIT: MOHAMMAD RAHMANI



IMAGE CREDIT: KEVIN GONZALEZ

As a female journalist, how do you see AI affecting the safety and freedom of women journalists in Africa?

Women journalists already face disproportionate levels of online abuse, harassment, and intimidation. AI risks amplifying these threats through deepfake pornography, identity manipulation, targeted harassment campaigns, and automated abuse.

Where should the line be drawn between governments using AI for security and protecting citizens' fundamental freedoms?

Governments have legitimate security responsibilities. However, security cannot become a blanket justification for mass surveillance or the suppression of dissent. The line should be drawn at transparency, proportionality, and accountability. African countries urgently need stronger data protection laws, independent judicial oversight, digital rights protections, and transparent regulatory frameworks governing AI technologies. There must also be greater investment in digital literacy so citizens can better identify misinformation and understand how AI systems operate in Africa.

What message would you send young African journalists about harnessing AI as a tool for freedom and accountability?

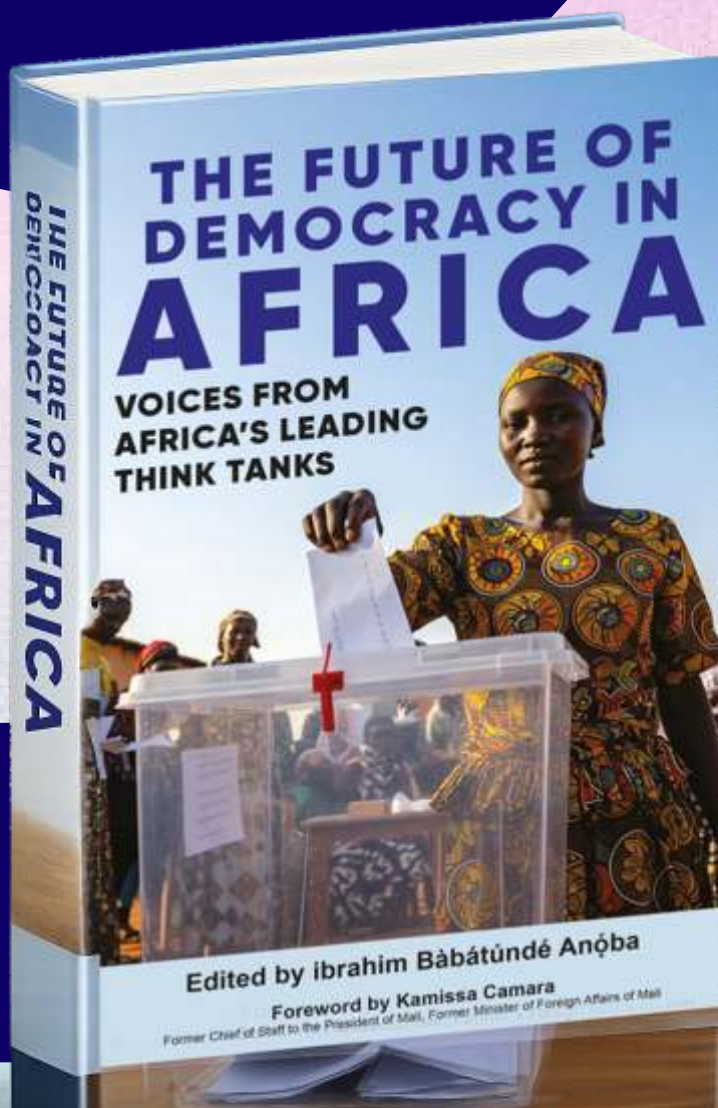
Young African journalists should not fear AI, but they should approach it critically and responsibly. AI can help journalists work faster, analyse information more effectively, access to knowledge. But technology should never replace the core values of journalism: accuracy, fairness, courage, and humanity. The future of journalism in Africa will depend not only on technological innovation but also on whether journalists remain committed to truth and public accountability in increasingly complex information environments.

"If democracy is to have a meaningful future on the continent, it must transcend the notion of ballot-box legitimacy."

Amb. Kamissa Camara,
The Future Of Democracy In Africa

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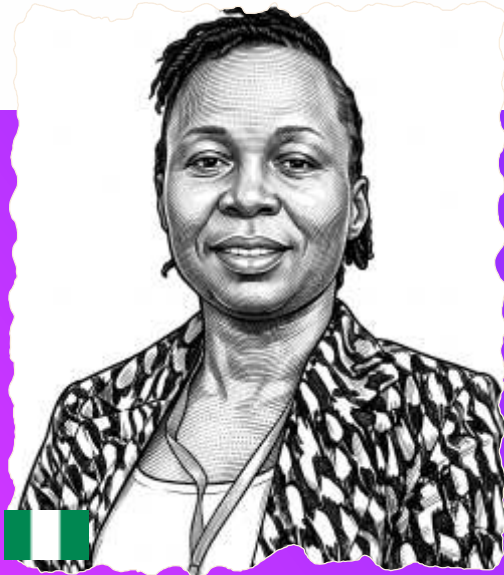
**The Future of
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Artificial Intelligence & Business

AI and New Imaging Technology for Agricultural Produce *Quality* and Authentication in Africa



Ijeoma Lawretta
Princewill-Ogbonna, PhD

*Michael Okpara University of Agriculture,
Umudike*

Dr. Ijeoma Lawretta Princewill-Ogbonna is a lecturer at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria.

Chiamaka Adinnu
African Liberty

Chiamaka Adinnu is a food systems researcher and an editor at African Liberty.



In a world where consumers increasingly demand to know not just what they are eating but where it came from and how it was treated, these technologies ensure and assure food safety and quality control.

The food and agriculture industry is evolving. Like most other sectors, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and a new generation of sensing, imaging, and data technologies is fundamentally revolutionizing how food is grown, processed, verified, and delivered to the consumer, even in developing regions like Africa. Several African countries, such as Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya, have adopted satellite imagery and machine learning to monitor crop production, improve irrigation, and enhance resource efficiency. In the meat and dairy industries, AI-driven computer vision systems on processing lines detect contamination and grading anomalies. Aquaculture operations in South Africa, Ghana, Zambia, and Tunisia deploy underwater imaging systems powered by neural networks to monitor fish health, detect sea lice infestations, and calculate biomass in real time. In the bakery and processed food sectors, near-infrared sensors integrated with machine learning flag compositional deviations mid-production, catching ingredient substitution or process drift before a batch reaches packaging. Barely a decade ago, for all of these applications, the African food industry relied primarily on traditional analytical methods, which, while mostly reliable, were either too time-consuming or too destructive, and inadequate to match the scale of modern food systems. But with AI, that era is now coming to an end.

Within the food and agricultural sector, agricultural produce is among the most counterfeited, mislabelled, and quality-misrepresented categories of goods in global trade. This is because they are among the hardest to verify, which has led to widespread food fraud in this category, particularly in Africa. Food fraud costs the global economy an estimated \$10-15 billion annually and could reach \$40 billion, according to the United States Food and Drug Administration. Moreover, food fraud can lead to significant food waste because when produce fails to meet the buyer's expectations at the point of purchase, it can be rejected outright. Producing waste is not just a loss of revenue for growers and retailers but also contributes to food insecurity and greenhouse gas emissions. And in an era of increasingly complex, globalized supply chains, the question of authenticity, that is, where food was grown, how it was handled, and whether it is what the label says, has become a matter of both consumer trust and public health.

AI and AI-powered technologies have emerged to overcome these problems. In particular, new imaging technology such as hyperspectral imaging (HSI) has shown great potential for detecting produce quality and authenticity in countries like South Africa, Kenya, and Egypt. Unlike conventional camera-based grading systems, which typically operate in the same visible-light range as the human eye to measure color and surface texture, HSI captures light reflected from a surface across hundreds of discrete wavelength bands simultaneously, from the visible spectrum deep into the near- and short-wave infrared. Different chemical compounds absorb and reflect light at characteristic wavelengths, making a hyperspectral image a spatial map and a chemical portrait. When combined with deep learning models trained on thousands of samples, these systems can identify defects, pathogens, and compositional attributes with a speed and precision no human grader could match.

Interestingly, the technology's ability to detect quality deterioration caused by physical damage, chilling injury, mechanical stress, browning, wilting, and microbial infection has been demonstrated across dozens of commodity types. In Africa, this is critical because detecting these early signs of spoilage allows for targeted interventions to minimize food losses in supply chains with limited cold storage infrastructure. But what is most important to note is that these assessments are entirely non-destructive, meaning the fruit or vegetable passes through a scanning station intact, with its commercial value undiminished. Furthermore, it is important to note the dynamic nature and the windows of opportunity this technology has opened. To further improve the consistency and reliability of grading fresh fruits and vegetables, researchers worldwide, including teams in Africa, are developing a 4D grading pipeline. The pipeline fuses visible and near-infrared (VNIR) and short-wave infrared (SWIR) hyperspectral imaging with structured-light 3D scanning to non-destructively evaluate both internal defects and external form. The system to detect subsurface bruising from the spectral data while simultaneously measuring the exact geometry of any surface defect and calculating the fruit's true volume, all in a single pass. The grading output mirrors established commercial standards, automatically assigning quality tiers from Premium to Reject with a transparent, auditable decision tree.



IMAGE CREDIT: TIM MOSSHOLDER

For the African food industry, the implications of reliable non-destructive internal quality assessment are significant. The ability to predict Brix (sugar content), firmness, and dry matter, which are traditionally tested by laboratory destruction of samples, enables entire batches to be characterized rather than spot-checked, thereby minimizing waste. With this technology, African fruit growers can sort for optimal ripeness windows, and consumers can receive produce that genuinely matches its grade.

Beyond quality assessment for agricultural produce, authenticity verification is another area where AI-powered technologies have been most helpful. The economic incentive to commit fraud through false geographic or origin claims is substantial, especially for high-value products like honey, olive oils, and single-origin Ethiopian coffees, cocoa, and other African commodities. Spectroscopic technologies, particularly Raman spectroscopy and near-infrared spectroscopy paired with machine learning, have shown remarkable capability as origin and authenticity authenticators. These techniques detect the molecular fingerprint of a food product, a complex signature influenced by soil mineralogy, climate, agricultural practices, and processing methods.

What makes modern AI-driven authentication truly powerful is the model's ability to learn from complexity that would confound any rule-based system. Geographic origin, for instance, cannot be reduced to a single chemical marker; it is expressed across hundreds of subtle spectral features whose interactions only a deep neural network can reliably decode. Systems trained on reference libraries of authenticated samples have achieved origin-discrimination accuracies that approach and, in some cases, exceed those of traditional DNA barcoding methods, at a fraction of the cost and in near-real time. The consumer-facing expression of these systems has become familiar through QR codes on food packaging. This code, when scanned, reveals the farm of origin, sustainability certifications, cold-chain temperature logs, and quality inspection results, all backed by blockchain records that cannot be retroactively altered.

Without a doubt, AI-driven technology in the African food industry and its supply chain has significantly improved transparency, efficiency, and integrity. Food safety and quality control have always been the industry's most solemn obligations to the public. And in a world where consumers increasingly demand to know not just what they are eating but where it came from and how it was treated, these technologies ensure and assure food safety and quality control.

African Entrepreneurs, Education, and A Quiet Rebellion

A moment with
Hammed Kayode Alabi



Hammed Kayode Alabi is an award-winning social entrepreneur and edtech leader dedicated to democratizing 21st-century skills for marginalized young Africans through innovative ventures like KLCL, Skill2Rural.Org, and the AI-powered career advisors, Rafiki AI and Rafiki X.

“I believe in a form of quiet rebellion through creation. You create something that responds to injustice without directly fighting it... When you are angry about the world, let creation be your response.”

Having dedicated your career to reaching young people in underserved and displaced communities, how can AI close the education gap for young Africans who have historically been left behind?

The first thing is to understand the trajectory of technology in Africa. When tablets were distributed to students in Osun State, they were not used for learning—they were used for entertainment. AI might repeat the same mistake if we are not intentional. Students could just use chatbots and get garbage in, garbage out. This is where teachers need to come in as co-facilitators, and where AI needs to be built as a co-intelligence. We deliberately built Rafiki on WhatsApp because that is the entry point of technology for many Africans. If someone has a 15MB data bundle and goes to an app store to download something, that data is already gone. With WhatsApp, you log in once and start chatting. Young people are naturally curious, and that curiosity is the spark. One student asked Rafiki about coding because he wanted to build a robot. A young lady with presentation anxiety received practical guidance—things that many of them had no one else to ask. That is the power of meeting people where they are. We need to go back to human skills, because the use of AI reflects the foundation of skills and values people already have. If students cannot think critically, they will not use AI critically either. Skills like creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and complex problem-solving — the ones we sometimes dismiss as soft—are the exact skills that determine who benefits from AI and who does not. We also need to talk about cognitive offloading, where you let AI handle all the thinking for you. That is dangerous. You should do your own thinking first, then use AI as a co-intelligence. The people who will truly benefit from AI are the ones who already have strong human skills to bring to that relationship.



IMAGE CREDIT: BENJAMIN DADA

With a strong focus on the professional development of young teachers as first responders to educational crises, how can AI support teachers in underserved communities who lack access to training?

The quality of teachers determines the quality of students they receive. AI can help teachers create lesson plans and free up time for actual teaching. It can also support assessment and help identify struggling students, so teachers can focus their energy where it is most needed. But this can only happen if teachers have the skills to use AI. When teachers are being paid less than \$10 or \$20 a month, what is the incentive to learn new technology? That becomes an economics and governance problem. Making AI proficiency part of recruitment criteria would change that naturally. Good teachers will always be good teachers, with or without AI. Bad teachers will remain bad teachers. AI handles administration and assessment; teachers do what they are extraordinary at—human interaction, emotional connection, and presence. That is why we say teachers make a difference in our lives, not an AI.

Are African governments genuinely using technology to expand educational freedom or to control what young people learn?

Honestly, I do not even know where we stand to answer that question. We are introducing programming and AI into curricula, but do the teachers actually know the content? Can they cascade it? We want to follow global trends, but are we doing the background work first? There are already young Africans who have created solutions. The question is, how do we partner with them to power classrooms and scale impact? Governments have sometimes preferred paying a foreign company over their own people. Rwanda partnered with Anthropic to power AI in schools—that is worth appreciating—but it is still a foreign company. We need African AI, sovereign AI, and African infrastructure. Because AI does not just come to be. Cloud computing, data centers, and GPUs power it. If we do not have enough data centers or the electricity to power them, what is AI? We need African entrepreneurs to start investing in the African AI ecosystem.

What is the biggest risk of leaving AI-driven education policy entirely in the hands of governments?

The first question is: Do we have leaders with political will, willing to work not for their own self-interest but for the people? Governments are not incapable of building strong AI systems. They just need the right people driving change. But when someone is more focused on recouping campaign money than serving people, where is the time to think about AI? We also need a society educated enough to hold the government accountable. You give technology to a school for student use, and someone sells it for personal gain. The most important thing is having individuals at every level willing to take genuine responsibility.

How can social entrepreneurs working in education hold governments accountable for how they deploy AI in schools?

I believe in a form of quiet rebellion through creation. You create something that responds to injustice without directly fighting it. When we created Rafiki, it was a direct response to students in schools without career counselors. We responded to that absence with technology. That is quite a rebellion—powerful, without carrying a placard. When you create something that works, governments have a choice to invite you to the table. Creation has to come first. When you are angry about the world, let creation be your response.

What does a truly AI-powered and equitable education system in Africa look like—and how far are we from achieving it?

It looks like having our own AI—our own infrastructure, our own data, our own knowledge base, something local and contextual. We need to convert our indigenous knowledge, our wisdom, even our own languages into AI solutions that we own, in a way that is equitable and ethical. I do not think we are far. There are already people building African-based AI platforms and networks. We just need agility, investment, and a rethinking of our educational system. We need creators, not just consumers. And we need our own people to trust what is built by Africans, for Africans.

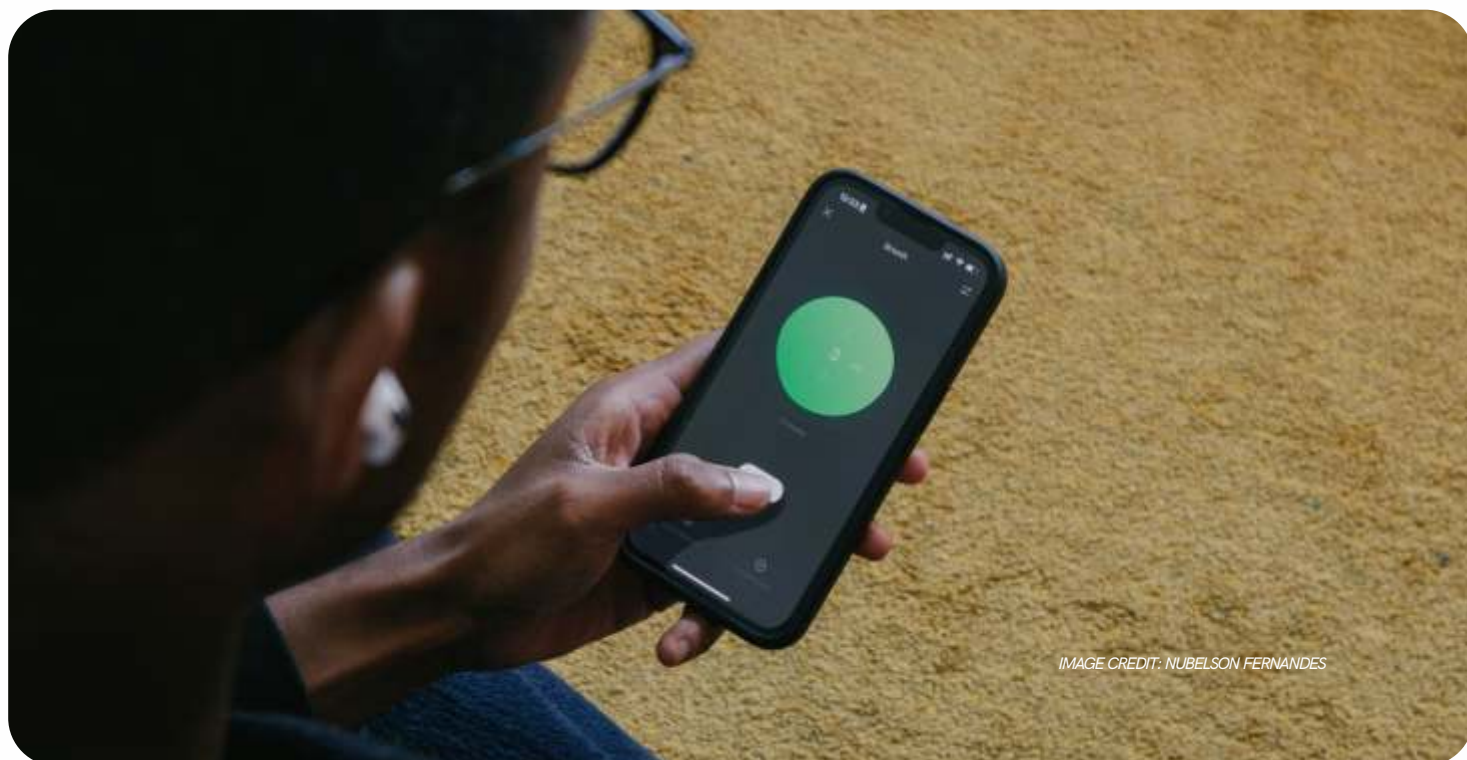
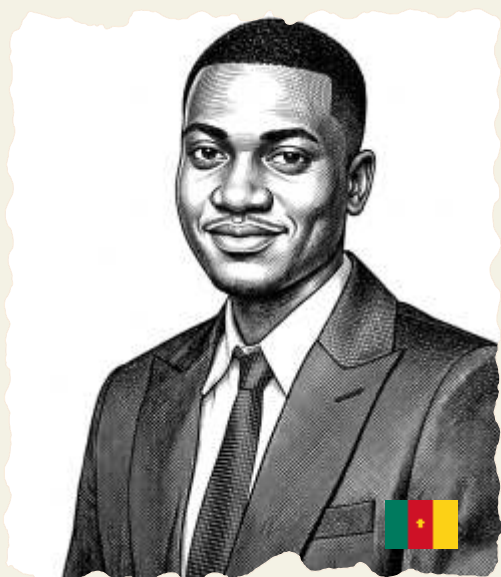


IMAGE CREDIT: NUBELSON FERNANDES

From Being an Intern to Creating an AI Equalizer in Africa



Klein Socrates
Co-founder of Jara AI

Klein (Keafo-on) Socrates is the Marketing and Communications Officer at Stoneshed Asset Management and the Co-founder of Jara AI.

My journey began in 2019 as a social media intern during the lockdown. I quickly realized that writing was not enough; to keep a brand alive digitally, I needed designs and videos. If the graphic designer was busy, my work stalled. This frustration drove me to master design and video editing, becoming a one-man creative powerhouse. In 2021, while working at a branding agency, I was obsessed with automating the "boring stuff" like client briefs. It was then I discovered my first AI tool (I had no idea it was AI back then).... Rytr. When ChatGPT and Midjourney exploded onto the scene in 2023, I knew a new era had begun. I was serving as a Marketing Lead for a tech startup while running my own agency on the side, but a recurring question haunted me: Why is high-level branding only accessible to the elite? I sat across from brilliant Cameroonian entrepreneurs who had the drive but could not afford agency fees or a full marketing team. They were invisible simply because they lacked the "human infrastructure" to execute their ideas. I realized AI was the ultimate equalizer.

That mission gave birth to Jara AI (www.jara-ai.com). I believe that every brand solving a real problem deserves to be seen. In early 2024, we started experimenting with AI for brand identities, helping over 1,000 small businesses design logos. Today, we have built an autonomous design agent that generates entire social media calendars, designs, and captions, including following strict brand guidelines. The goal is simple: With Jara AI, you can have a business idea right now and, within 15 minutes, possess a professional logo, a strategy, and a month's worth of marketing content. We are currently building our Video AI agent to push the frontier even further. We are not just building an app; we are leveling the playing field for every African founder.

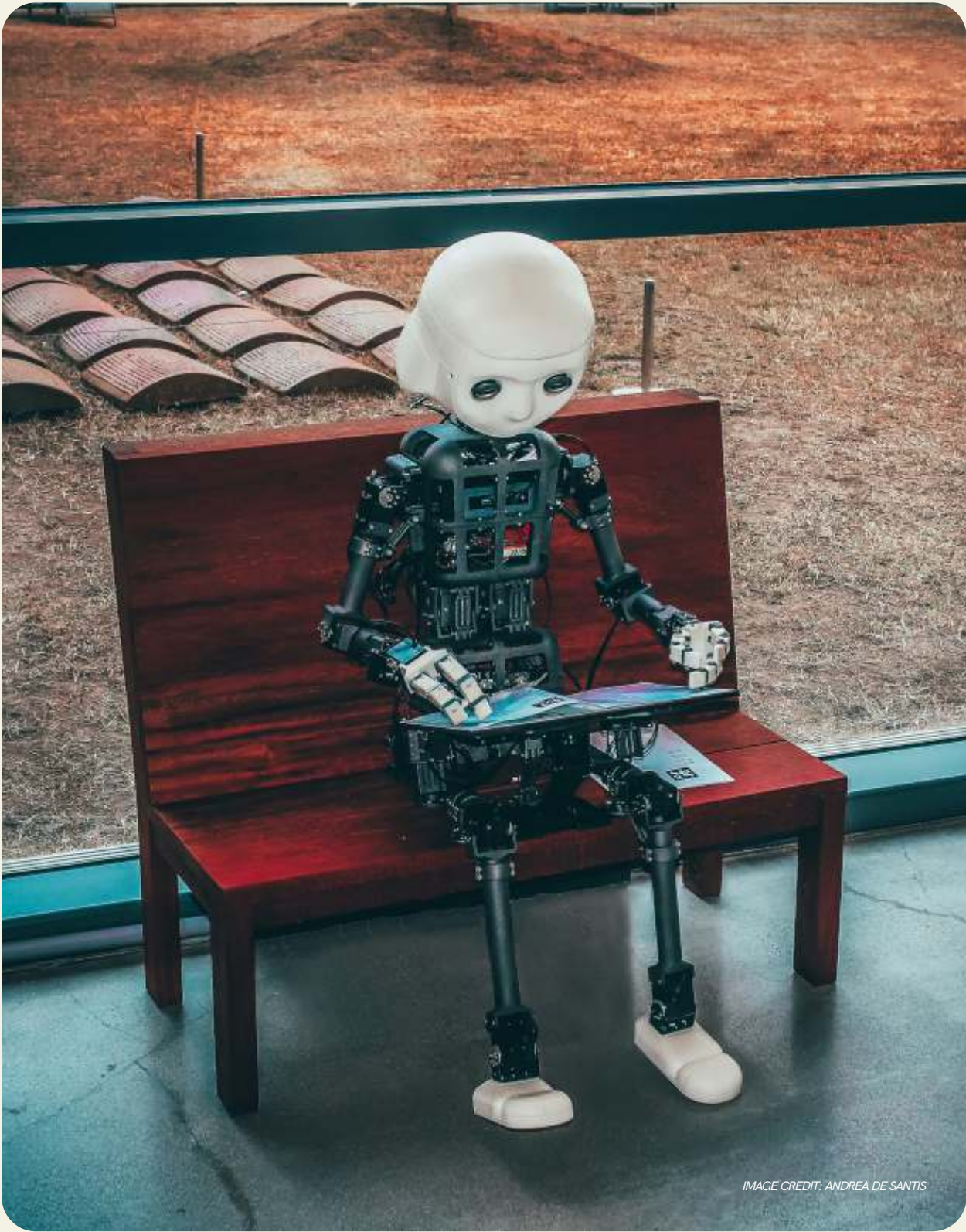
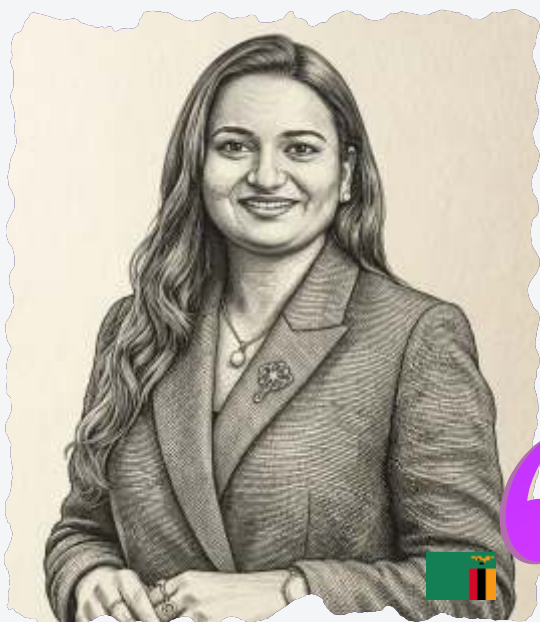


IMAGE CREDIT: ANDREA DE SANTIS

Freedom by *Design*

Building AI That Serves the *African* People



Dr. Pooja Gupta is a published researcher, international speaker, and CEO of BGS Group Zambia, with expertise in AI, fintech, and digital transformation across the African continent. She specializes in helping governments and enterprises build inclusive, secure, and scalable systems at the intersection of AI, fintech, and policy.

Individual freedom as a foundational right that must be built into systems from the ground up—not granted conditionally by the state.

Dr. Pooja Gupta
BGS Group Zambia

Could you briefly introduce yourself and tell us about your work, as well as how issues like technology or Artificial Intelligence intersect with your interests?

I am Dr. Pooja Gupta, CEO of BGS Group Zambia, working across AI, fintech, and digital transformation in Africa, particularly Zambia. My work sits at the intersection of technology, policy, and real-world impact—helping governments and enterprises design systems that are inclusive, secure, and scalable. I am especially passionate about how Artificial Intelligence can accelerate development while safeguarding human dignity, economic participation, and national sovereignty.

You argue that Africa can leapfrog development stages with AI, just as it skipped landlines for mobile phones. What conditions must be in place for this to succeed—and where do you see the greatest risks?

Africa can leapfrog with AI, but only if three conditions are met: access to quality data, digital infrastructure (including cloud and compute), and policy alignment. Without reliable data, AI becomes ineffective or biased. Infrastructure—especially affordable cloud and shared data centers—is essential to avoid dependence on external systems. The greatest risks are digital colonialism and inequality. If Africa consumes AI built elsewhere without local context, we risk losing control over our data and narratives. Additionally, uneven access may widen the gap between urban and rural populations.

Across fintech, e-governance, and digital identity, where does AI have the most untapped potential to expand economic freedom for ordinary Africans, and why is that opportunity still largely unrealized?

The biggest opportunity lies in digital identity and e-governance. AI can enable predictive service delivery—where governments anticipate needs instead of reacting. In fintech, AI-driven credit scoring can unlock financial inclusion for millions without formal banking histories. However, this potential remains unrealized due to fragmented systems, lack of interoperability, and regulatory hesitation. Many initiatives operate in silos rather than as integrated ecosystems.

You support open-source AI frameworks and multilingual models for African languages. What must African governments change in their policies to make this real rather than remaining dependent on foreign-built solutions?

African governments must shift from being consumers to contributors. This means investing in open datasets, funding local AI research, and mandating interoperability standards. Policies should incentivize startups and universities to build models in African languages. Most importantly, governments must collaborate regionally—no single country can build this alone.

What does a responsible AI governance framework for Africa look like—one that protects individual freedoms rather than enabling surveillance or authoritarian control?

A responsible framework must be rights-based. It should include transparency, data protection, accountability mechanisms. Citizens must know how their data is used, and there must be independent oversight bodies. At the same time, regulation should not stifle innovation. The balance lies in “sandboxes”—controlled environments where innovation can be tested safely.

You have spoken about using AI and blockchain for transparent land registries. How transformative could this be for economic empowerment and what political barriers rarely get discussed?

This can be transformative. Secure, transparent land records can unlock credit, reduce disputes, and empower citizens economically. However, the real barriers are political—not technical. Land ownership systems are often tied to power structures, and transparency threatens existing interests. Without political will, even the best technology will fail.

What structural changes in education and policy would best accelerate young African innovators from early spark to real careers in tech?

We need structural reform in education—moving from theory to practical, project-based learning. Early exposure to coding, AI tools, and entrepreneurship is key. Policy-wise, governments should create innovation hubs, provide funding access, and connect youth to real industry problems. Talent exists; the missing link is opportunity and mentorship.

Is AI, as currently deployed in Africa, expanding or narrowing individual freedoms, and what needs to change for it to become a genuine tool of liberation?

Currently, it is doing both. AI is improving access to services and financial systems, but it also risks enabling surveillance and data misuse. To make AI a tool of liberation, we must prioritize ethical design, local ownership, and citizen awareness. Freedom must be a design principle, not an afterthought. Globally, Africa is often seen as an “emerging market” with potential. But the reality on the ground is more complex—we have innovation, but also infrastructure gaps, funding challenges, and policy delays. In Zambia, for example, there is strong political will and growing innovation, but scaling remains a challenge due to limited resources and fragmented ecosystems.

What one bold policy recommendation would you make to an African head of state reading this magazine?

My recommendation: Establish a Pan-African AI Infrastructure Alliance. This initiative would pool resources across countries to build shared data centers, AI research labs, and open datasets. It would reduce dependency on external providers and position Africa as a producer—not just a consumer—of AI solutions. In closing, Africa stands at a defining moment. Artificial Intelligence is not just another technological wave—it is a foundational force that will shape economies, governance, and the very fabric of society. The question is not whether Africa will adopt AI, but how it will do so. If we approach AI with intention—grounded in our realities, driven by local talent, and guided by strong ethical frameworks—we have the opportunity to build systems that expand freedom, unlock economic participation, and create inclusive prosperity. But if we remain passive consumers, we risk deepening dependencies and inequalities. The future of AI in Africa must be one where innovation serves people, where data empowers rather than exploits, and where technology reflects our languages, cultures, and aspirations. It requires bold leadership, regional collaboration, and a commitment to putting citizens at the center of every digital transformation effort. Africa does not need to catch up—we have the chance to lead differently, and perhaps, lead better.

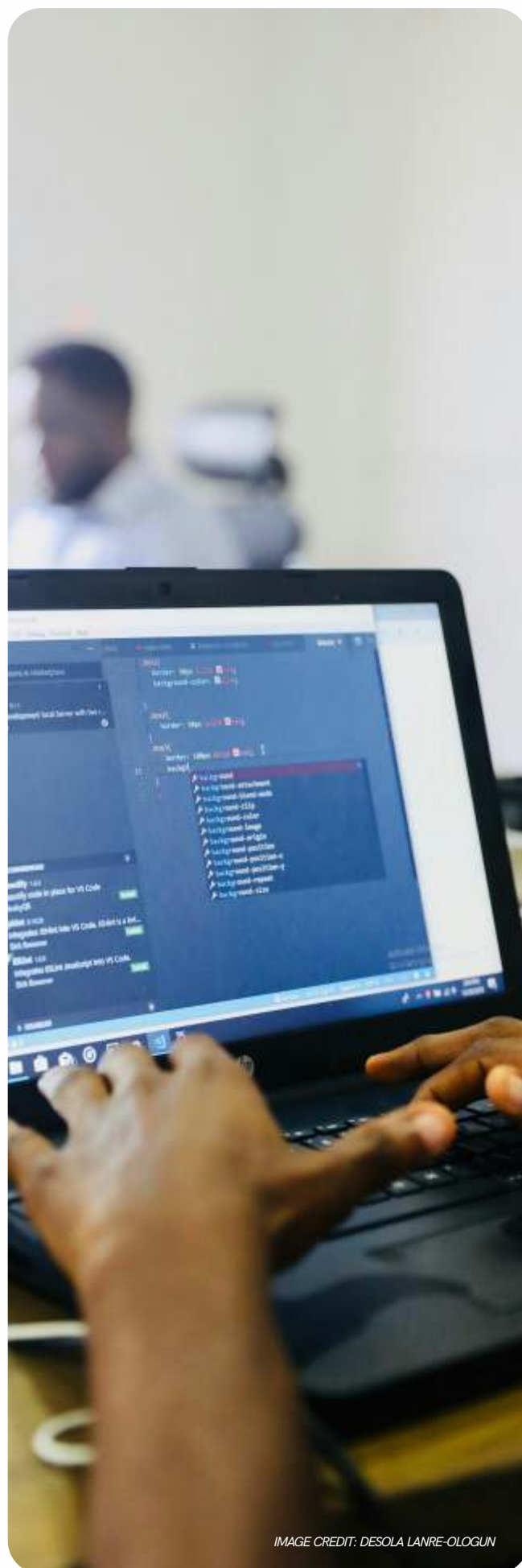
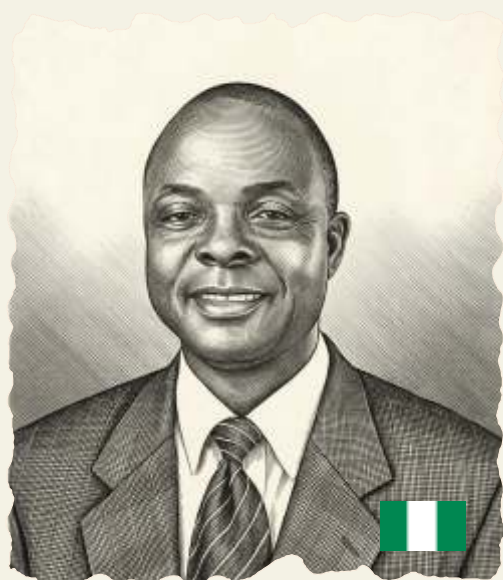


IMAGE CREDIT: DESOLA LANRE-OLOGUN

Artificial Intelligence & Law

The *Relevance* of Artificial Intelligence in Legal Research



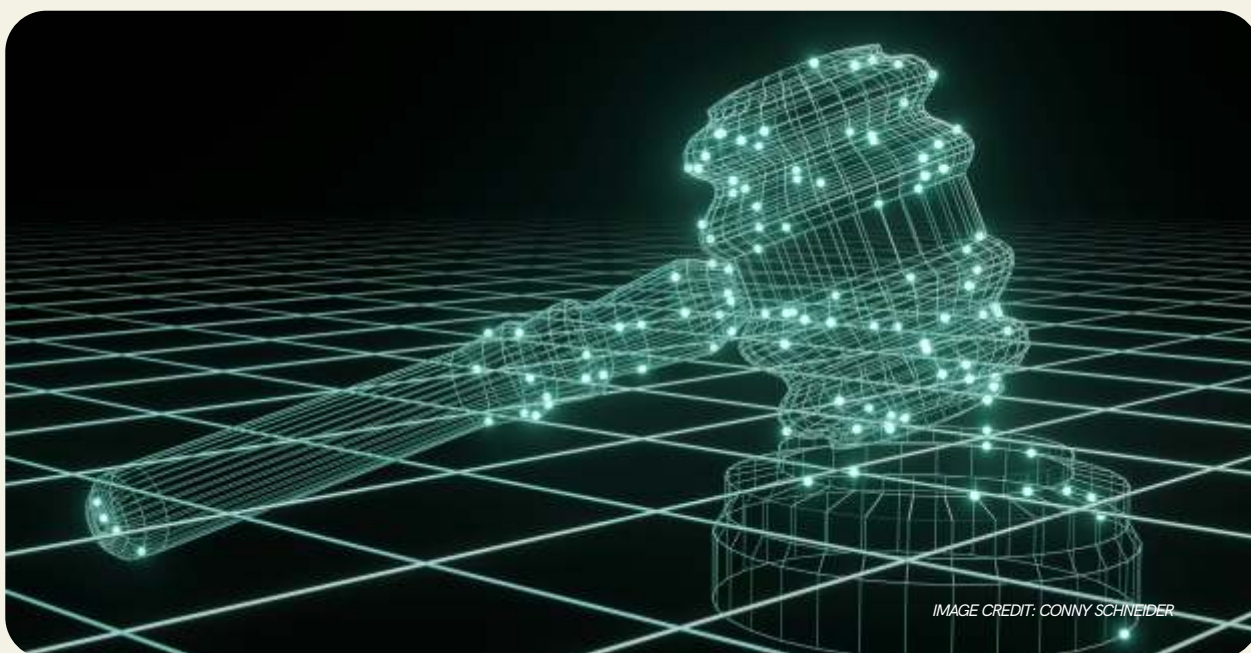
Professor Andrew Aondona Akume

Andrew Aondona Akume, PhD, is a Professor of Law at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

“AI provides global access to legal resources such as case law, legislation, journals, conference materials, books, etc., to a researcher anywhere he is in the world where internet access is available.”

Prior to the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, researchers had to manually search for legal resources to conduct legal research. This was done by manually searching for relevant books, journals, magazines, law reports, etc. Sometimes, some legal resources exist, but due to human limitations, one may not know of their existence. This was largely because there was no common pool where knowledge could be globally stored and retrieved anywhere in the world. With the emergence of the World Wide Web, however, information could now be communicated, stored, accessed, and shared globally. As people use the internet, the information they share is also stored on the web and can be accessed anywhere in the world.

AI is a branch of Computer Science that deals with the creation of computer systems capable of gathering information, analyzing it, and producing required answers when asked, in a manner similar to the human brain. By gathering information from the web and analyzing it, AI can provide solutions to many questions of life posed to it. AI depends heavily on information available on the web for its operational functionality. AI uses its search engines to gather information from the public through the internet. From this functionality, AI is able to generate and utilize information that could be accessed globally. AI, therefore, helps source information globally that may not be readily available locally to a researcher.



Legal research in Africa primarily uses doctrinal and empirical methodologies, the dominant one being doctrinal. The doctrinal methodology is theoretical. It depends on the use of imagination and theories based on abstract or academic reasoning. A good legal researcher is one who develops the skill or art of looking for legal resources needed to solve a legal problem. The researcher must therefore have the skill of identifying, storing, and utilizing legal resources for the purpose of solving legal problems. To attain this, the legal researcher, before the emergence of AI, used to collect books, journals, law reports, statutes, etc., by manually searching for them, not knowing in some cases whether they existed or not.

In modern times, however, the researcher's work has been made easy. With the help of computer systems, information can be stored globally in a single system called the web. The web consists of databases that store, process, and provide information from a single global source. It is largely from these databases that AI is able to gather information to assist the researcher at just a click away. These AI platforms, such as ChatGPT and Meta AI, can analyze, think, and produce or predict solutions to legal problems.

AI has proved itself to be very useful and relevant to legal research. This could be noticed in the following areas

I. It provides global access to legal resources such as case law, legislation, journals, conference materials, books, etc., to a researcher any where he is in the world where internet access is available. Researchers no longer have to visit library catalogs to manually search for legal resources.

II. It provides digitally speedy legal solutions. Once you engage an AI tool, it could, within seconds, provide the needed solution, thereby saving time and man-hours that could have been spent looking for the materials and thinking through what to do. AI does all that in a few minutes.

III. The solutions AI provides are reliable in most cases and provide a good lead to what the researcher should or could do further. For example, AI could help provide advice and lead to where other solutions could be found globally.

IV. AI could help provide drafts or precedents for agreements, deeds, wills, etc., to a lawyer with no prior practical experience.

V. AI eliminates the cost of building a physical library because it can access virtual libraries worldwide.

The use of AI in modern legal research is indispensable; however, it presents serious challenges that may be summarized as follows.

I. It could make an undisciplined researcher very lazy, leading them to fall into the trap of plagiarism easily. This is what we refer to in Nigeria as “cut and paste syndrome,” where researchers just cut a research material, paste and print it out as if it were a product of their efforts without due acknowledgment of the sources.

II. It reduces researchers’ ability to think critically and develop their own findings.

III. AI sometimes produces incorrect information. This is because it also depends on information available on the web. Some of that information is sometimes incorrect or not based on empirical facts. There is a need, therefore, to verify information supplied by AI before using it.

IV. AI is only accessible where there are internet services. This is a serious challenge, especially in developing countries like Nigeria.

On the whole, one could conclude that AI is necessary and indispensable for modern legal research. AI has access to several databases that a researcher may not be able to afford to subscribe to. With AI, those legal resources are available. This is how good AI is. Lazy researchers, however, who do not cross-check information or advice supplied by AI, may end up in trouble because AI sometimes uses unverified information it also finds on the web. Hardworking researchers will, however, discover that AI is a very reliable research assistant. Developing countries like Nigeria need to expose their researchers to AI. This is because AI helps a researcher achieve global relevance by bringing global legal resources to them. AI is, therefore, a very good tool for legal researchers, especially for those in developing countries.

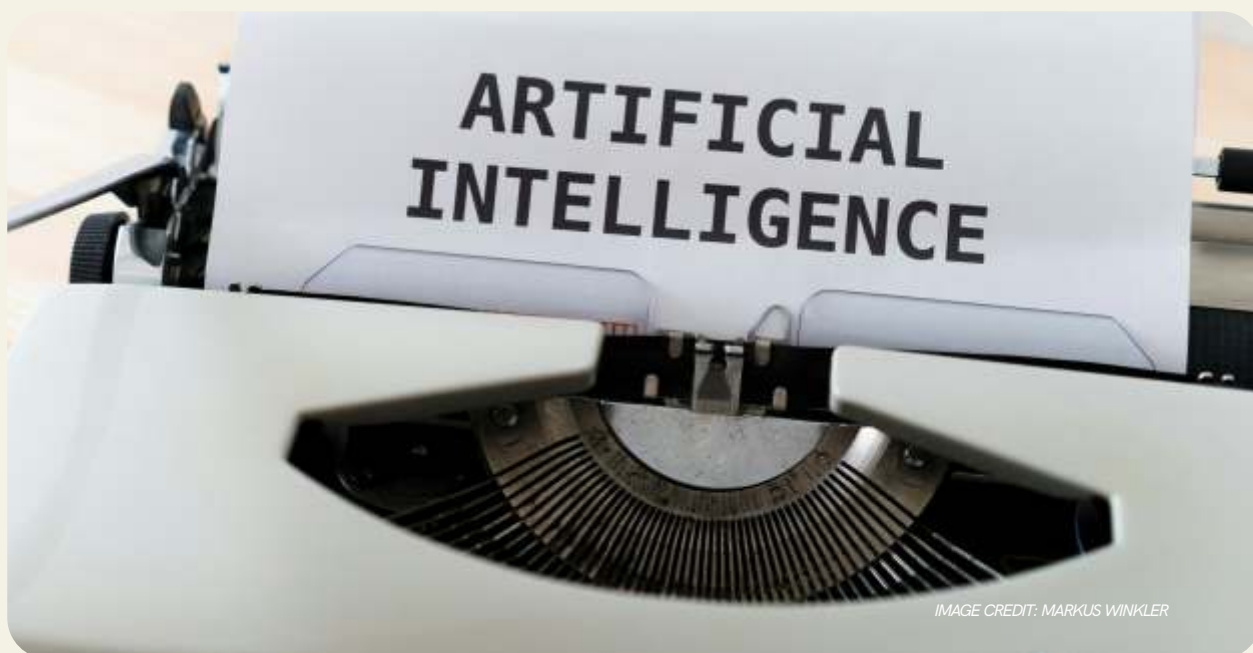


IMAGE CREDIT: MARKUS WINKLER

A Weapon in the Hands of Authoritarians

Femi Falana Speaks



Femi Falana, SAN

Femi Falana is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria and a leading human rights activist dedicated to public interest litigation, constitutional law, and the defense of civil liberties in Nigeria and across Africa.

Africa must resist the danger of becoming a mere digital colony in the emerging global AI order... African states must negotiate technology partnerships from positions of dignity and strategic interest.



You have observed that Nigeria often experiences a "rule of rulers" and not the "rule of law." Do you see AI reducing human bias and impunity in our justice system, or do you fear it will simply give "rulers" more efficient tools for surveillance?

Artificial Intelligence has the potential to improve the administration of justice by enhancing efficiency, reducing adjudication delays, simplifying legal research, and limiting certain forms of subjective human bias. In many jurisdictions, AI tools are already assisting courts with case management, transcription, and predictive legal analytics. In a society where democratic institutions are weak and executive lawlessness persists, AI may become an instrument for reinforcing authoritarian control. A government that disregards constitutionalism can deploy AI-driven surveillance systems, facial recognition technologies, and predictive monitoring tools to intimidate political opponents, journalists, labor activists, and civil society organizations. Unless judicial independence is strengthened, data protection laws are rigorously enforced, and oversight mechanisms are created, AI may automate impunity rather than dismantle it. Technology must remain subordinate to constitutional governance and fundamental rights.

In Falana v. Meta, the court affirmed that state of health is personal information that cannot be exposed without consent. How should African human rights activists approach the right to privacy in an AI world where data is often stored and processed indefinitely across borders?

The digital economy has transformed personal data into one of the most valuable commodities in the world. Unfortunately, many African citizens surrender sensitive information without fully appreciating the long-term implications of data harvesting, profiling, and algorithmic monitoring. Human rights activists in Africa must therefore treat digital privacy as an extension of the struggle for human dignity and liberty. African states must enact stronger data protection regimes and ensure that multinational corporations operating on the continent comply strictly with local laws. In addition, citizens should have enforceable rights to know how their data is collected, processed, stored, and utilized by both governments and private corporations.

Your recent legal victory against Meta Platforms Inc. established a significant precedent for data privacy in Nigeria. In an era where AI thrives on the mass collection of personal data, how should African judiciaries evolve to protect citizens from "algorithmic harm" and unauthorized data exploitation?

The significance of Femi Falana SAN v Meta Platforms Inc. lies in affirming that global technology corporations are subject to constitutional norms and legal accountability. The judgment reinforces the principle that technological advancement cannot supersede the fundamental rights of citizens. Judicial officers should be trained continuously on issues relating to AI, digital privacy, and algorithmic accountability. Equally important, legislatures should establish clear statutory obligations requiring transparency in AI systems, including disclosure obligations where automated decisions materially affect citizens.

You have often warned against African leaders signing international agreements that "mortgage the future" of the continent. As Western and Asian tech giants set global AI standards, how can Africa draft its own "AI sovereignty" to ensure these technologies serve our local economic freedoms?

Africa must resist the danger of becoming a mere digital colony in the emerging global AI order. Historically, the continent supplied raw materials to industrial powers while remaining dependent on foreign technology and expertise. Digital sovereignty requires deliberate investment in indigenous technological capacity.



IMAGE CREDIT: MILAN MALKOMES



African governments must prioritize public funding for research institutions, innovation hubs, universities, and local software development. Furthermore, African states must negotiate technology partnerships from positions of dignity and strategic interest. Agreements relating to AI infrastructure, cloud storage, telecommunications, and digital identity systems should not compromise national autonomy or expose citizens to unchecked foreign surveillance. AI must ultimately serve African priorities such as healthcare delivery, agricultural development, legal access, education, and poverty reduction rather than reinforcing dependency on foreign corporations.

You recently warned that Nigeria risks becoming a "one-party state" by 2027 due to judicial interference in internal party affairs. As the Independent National Electoral Commission considers more "automated" systems for results transmission and voter verification, how can AI tools be used to protect electoral integrity?

Technology can improve electoral transparency if deployed within a framework of accountability and institutional independence. Automated voter accreditation, biometric verification, and electronic transmission of results may reduce incidents of ballot manipulation, multiple voting, and manual interference. To safeguard electoral integrity, AI-based electoral technologies must therefore remain transparent, independently audited, and subject to public scrutiny. Political parties, civil society organizations, and election observers should have access to verification mechanisms capable of testing the reliability of such systems. In addition, judicial interference in democratic processes must be minimized through strict adherence to constitutional principles.

You have long fought for "fair wages" that reflect the country's economic reality. With AI threatening to automate many entry-level and blue-collar jobs, what specific legislative protections are necessary to make AI expand the middle class?

The primary danger associated with AI in developing economies is that it may increase productivity while simultaneously worsening unemployment, inequality, and social exclusion. In societies where millions already struggle with poverty and underemployment, uncontrolled automation may deepen class divisions between a small technological elite and the vast majority of workers. Labor protections must therefore evolve in response to technological realities.

IMAGE CREDIT: WORDPRESS

Governments should enact legislation requiring employers who introduce large-scale automation to implement retraining and reskilling programs for affected employees. Workers displaced through AI-driven restructuring should also enjoy adequate severance protections and access to social welfare support. Trade unions must equally be involved in policy discussions concerning workplace automation, digital monitoring, and algorithmic management systems. Employers should not be permitted to use AI tools to undermine collective bargaining rights, exploit gig workers, or evade labor obligations. Beyond this, there is a need for more investment in public education, vocational training, and digital literacy. Technological advancement should expand human prosperity rather than create a permanent underclass of economically displaced citizens.

You have frequently challenged the government to recover billions in looted funds and have blasted the "provocative" allocation of billions for renovations and "jumbo pay" while citizens face extreme hardship. Given that Africa loses upwards of \$88 billion annually to illicit financial flows, can AI-driven real-time auditing and tracking ensure government transparency?

AI can significantly strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms by improving financial monitoring, procurement transparency, and real-time auditing of government expenditure. AI-driven systems can detect unusual financial patterns, identify suspicious transactions, and reduce opportunities for manual manipulation within public institutions. For AI to become an effective anti-corruption tool, it must operate within a broader framework of transparency and democratic accountability. Governments should publish procurement data openly, strengthen whistleblower protections, and guarantee the operational independence of anti-corruption agencies. Civil society organizations, journalists, and citizens must also have access to public financial information. Technology should empower public scrutiny rather than conceal official misconduct behind technical complexity.

You have previously challenged the "obnoxious provisions" of the Cybercrime Act that were used to silence dissent. With the rise of AI-generated content, how can we balance curbing misinformation with state regulation without shrinking civic space?

Across Africa, cybercrime laws and national security regulations have increasingly been deployed to intimidate journalists, activists, opposition figures, and critical voices. The struggle against misinformation must not become a pretext for criminalizing dissent and suppressing democratic freedoms. While AI-generated misinformation presents genuine dangers, including electoral manipulation and reputational harm, regulatory responses must comply with constitutional safeguards and international human rights standards. Instead of excessive criminal sanctions, governments should prioritize transparency, public digital education, fact-checking initiatives, and platform accountability. Independent regulatory institutions, rather than politically controlled agencies, should supervise content moderation frameworks.

When an AI system makes a decision that violates a citizen's rights, such as a wrongful facial recognition match, who should be legally liable in the Nigerian context: the AI developer, the local platform, or the state agency using it?

Liability in cases involving AI-related violations should depend on the nature of the wrongdoing and the degree of control exercised by each actor involved. However, citizens who suffer harm from defective or discriminatory AI systems should not be left without effective legal remedies. Where a government agency deploys facial recognition or automated decision-making systems, it bears a constitutional duty to ensure that such technologies comply with standards of legality, fairness, and non-discrimination. At the same time, corporations and software developers that knowingly design or distribute flawed systems should equally be held accountable under principles of negligence, product liability, and data protection law. There is therefore a need for comprehensive legislation establishing standards for transparency, accountability, explainability, and independent oversight of AI systems. Citizens must also retain the right to challenge automated decisions in court and demand human review where their rights are adversely affected.

AI IS A TOOL,
BUT ALSO
A COMPANION —
GUIDING HUMANITY
TO EVOLVE AND
SHAPE REALITY.



A TOOL
AMPLIFYING
OUR POTENTIAL



A FRIEND
WALKING
BESIDE US



AN IDEAL
BUILDING A BETTER
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TOGETHER,
WE EVOLVE.
TOGETHER,
WE SHAPE REALITY.

John Ray

• JOHN RAY'S FINE ART •

The Divide
That Unites



John Phiri is a visual artist from Lusaka, Zambia. At 32, John has built his artistic identity around the powerful beauty of charcoal—a medium he connects with more deeply than any other. Through every stroke and shade, his work captures emotion, human connection, and untold stories that inspire love, compassion, and reflection.

John Phiri

John Ray's Fine Art

About the Work

The Divide That Unites is a mixed-medium artwork that exists at the intersection of human craft and AI—a visual manifesto for the age of co-creation. Rendered through the deliberate, tactile strokes of ballpoint pen and pencil, and completed in collaboration with AI-generative tools, the piece does not merely depict the relationship between humanity and technology. It embodies it.

At its center stands a figure—part human, part architectural data—whose dual nature mirrors the work's central philosophy: that the line between the organic and the digital is not a boundary to be defended, but a threshold to be crossed together. On one side, lush hand-drawn landscapes pulse with warmth and imperfection. On the other side, a luminous cityscape of geometric precision rises from the same root, drawn by the same hand, but shaped by a different kind of intelligence.

Concept and Philosophy

The concept behind this work is rooted in the idea of parallel footprints. A human takes a step—leaving behind a mark that is instinctive, emotional, imperfect. AI follows, tracing a digital echo of that same step: precise, boundless, and generative. Neither leads. Neither follows entirely. They move in tandem, each incomplete without the other. This is not a story of replacement. It is a story of evolution. The work asks: what happens when one leg is flesh, and the other is data? The answer is not imbalance—it is momentum. A new kind of stride. A new kind of world is being built with every shared step forward. As inscribed within the composition itself: "AI is a tool, but also a companion—guiding humanity to evolve and shape reality." The work visualizes this not as a slogan, but as a lived truth—present in every line drawn by hand, and every form refined by algorithm.

Medium and Process

"The Divide That Unites" was created using ballpoint pen and pencil on paper, with AI-generative image tools integrated into the compositional and finishing process. The human hand established the foundational forms—the figure, the landscapes, the raw visual narrative. AI extended those forms, filling negative space with structural detail, refining light and shadow, and expanding the architectural world-building beyond what the hand alone had time to render. The result is a work that could not exist as either medium alone. The textures of the ballpoint carry a humanity that no algorithm can replicate. The digital layers carry a scale and precision that no single hand can sustain. Together, they produce a third thing—something greater than the sum of its parts. This is precisely the point.

How AI Can *Unlock* the Law for Every African

Conversation With Chinua Asuzu



Chinua Asuzu is a Nigerian attorney, author, and legal-writing consultant whose work advances rigorous advocacy, clearer professional communication, and higher standards in legal practice.

Africa needs AI regulation that protects freedom without strangling innovative and inventive genius... the framework should preserve room for experimentation, startup entry, open competition, and sector-specific adaptation.

Thinking about legal clarity, you are a major advocate for plain language in African law. How can AI tools like Large Language Models (LLMs) help simplify complex legal jargon for the average African citizen, thereby advancing individual freedom through a better understanding of the law?

Law should not be a private dialect. It is the language by which governments, courts, and lawyers affect ordinary lives. Large language models can restate statutes, contracts, judgments, and public notices in clear Standard English, local languages, question-and-answer formats, or step-by-step guides. That can broaden legal understanding and, therefore, expand freedoms. But they must simplify without falsifying. Law may be complex in content; it need not be complex in form.

With your expertise in judicial writing, how do you see AI-assisted drafting impacting the dispensation of justice in African courts? Can relying on AI affect lawyers' and judges' reasoning and sense of judgment?

AI can help courts sort records, summarize evidence, draft routine passages, and reduce clerical delay. But its deeper value is in issue formulation. Judges and lawyers can explain the problem to AI and prompt it to convert it into a deep-issue formulation, as illustrated in one of my books *Brief-Writing Master Plan and Judicial Writing: A Benchmark for the Bench*. The deep-issue format helps a judge define and refine the real problem the judgment must solve. It is a plain-language tool because it states the governing principle, the legally operative facts, and the precise question in ordinary, intelligible prose.

As a writing coach, what are your concerns regarding "intellectual laziness" in the legal profession as AI becomes more prevalent? How do we ensure that young African lawyers use AI to enhance, rather than replace, critical legal thinking?

My fear is automation bias and intellectual laziness dressed up as efficiency. A young lawyer who lets AI read, think, structure, and verify for him may produce fluent prose, yet harbor a weak mind. The sequence matters: first read, think, identify the issue, and state your own view; then use AI to test structure, expose omissions, and improve clarity. AI should be a sparring partner, not a surrogate brain. A responsible human lawyer must check every authority for pertinence and every proposition for doctrinal soundness.

In terms of access to justice, many Africans cannot afford legal counsel. Do you believe AI can bridge this gap, or does it pose a risk to the quality of justice and the rights of the underprivileged?

AI can and should bridge the gap. Africans should learn AI and learn how to prompt it for governmental, legal, and tax information, as well as drafting documents like affidavits. Prompt engineering should be taught in African high schools. AI can help laypeople understand a dispute, identify documents, locate procedures, and decide when they need human counsel. That's valuable in societies where legal fees are high and legal knowledge is scarce. But AI should be supervised, rights-sensitive, multilingual, and linked to human review whenever liberty, livelihood, land, or family is at stake.

Let us talk about legislative drafting. In your view, could AI help African parliaments draft clearer, more consistent laws that promote a stable environment for prosperity and investment?

Yes. Legislative drafting depends heavily on structure, consistency, terminology, and revision. AI can help compare bills against existing laws, detect contradictions, harmonize defined terms, simplify syntax, and expose ambiguity before enactment. Clear laws reduce friction, lower compliance costs, and improve investment confidence. But legislatures must still make the value judgments.

You teach brief-writing as a "master plan." Can AI ever truly replicate the human nuance and cultural empathy required to persuade an African judge in a sensitive human rights case?

My short answer is no. Persuasion in law is not just about logic and clear thought. It requires judgment about audience, tone, timing, institutional psychology, and cultural meaning. It must recruit Aristotle's rhetorical triangle: ethos (ethical persuasion), logos (logical persuasion), and pathos (emotional persuasion). In a sensitive human rights case, for example, the advocate must know how to humanize the dispute without melodrama and be forceful without losing credibility. AI can tighten structure and sharpen clarity, but it does not inhabit the courtroom's moral atmosphere. It can mimic advocacy, but it cannot replicate the advocate's human tact, restraint, and cultural feel.



IMAGE CREDIT: LUCIA MACEDO



IMAGE CREDIT: AYOOLA SALAKO

Think about regulations and freedoms. As a lawyer, what regulatory framework do you think Africa needs to protect civil liberties while not stifling the innovation that drives economic freedom?

Africa needs AI regulation that protects freedom without strangling innovative and inventive genius. At a minimum, we should enact baseline rules on privacy, data stewardship, non-discrimination, transparency, contestability, and human review for high-impact decisions. But the framework should also preserve room for experimentation, startup entry, open competition, and sector-specific adaptation. Africa should not become a museum of imported rules. We need local agency, local infrastructure, local languages, and local innovation.

Nigeria's judicial system is notoriously plagued by severe case backlogs. How can AI-driven case management and automated legal drafting specifically help Nigerian courts transition from manual processes to a digital-first approach that accelerates the delivery of justice and economic certainty for businesses?

Nigeria's backlog problem is partly a workflow problem. AI can help only if it rides on serious digitization. Used well, it can classify filings, flag missing documents, generate hearing schedules, track dormant cases, organize records, and produce routine procedural drafts. That would reduce delay, improve visibility, and help courts move from paper chaos to a searchable workflow. The economic gain is real: when courts become faster and more predictable, contract enforcement improves, transaction risk falls, and business confidence rises.

Do you have any other comments or general advice for our readers on AI use?

My advice is simple: learn the technology, but do not worship it. Avoid automation bias. Use AI to clarify, translate, test, accelerate, research, and widen access. Do not use it to evade thought or responsibility. Africa should not enter the AI age merely as a consumer of foreign systems. We should build local capacity, protect dignity, and keep human beings at the center. Freedom and prosperity will depend on whether we use AI wisely, critically, and on our own ubuntu terms.

Coding Justice, AI, and *Legal* Pluralism

with Anthony C. Diala



Anthony C. Diala is a Professor of Law at the University of Western Cape and Director of the Centre for Legal Integration in Africa, with expertise in legal pluralism, African customary law, and legal integration.

AI can mitigate these hurdles by automating compliance checks across Africa's fragmented regulations... and even reduce disputes through predictive analysis.



Anthony C. Diala, PhD
University of Western Cape

With governments in African countries adopting AI for security, from your perspective on human rights, how do you advise them to ensure political freedom and individual liberty?

AI surveillance is problematic because of weak legal systems, algorithmic biases, and breaches of privacy rights, which could expose personal information to malicious actors. Accordingly, African states should establish specialized oversight institutions to monitor the deployment of AI and document how it infringes on individual liberties. This will inform best practices on AI usage.

You advocated for curriculum decolonization. How does the rise of AI change the way we teach law in African universities to ensure we are producing freedom-oriented legal thinkers?

This is an important question because most learners rely on generative AI from large language models (LLMs). For those who do not know, LLMs are neural networks that model and generate data through sequential pre-training on large-scale datasets of text. The interesting thing is that most major LLMs are produced by European firms with commercial/political motives. Thus, AI algorithms can incorporate racial, gender, and geographic biases in their training data, leading to discriminatory outcomes. We must therefore teach students to recognize the power imbalances and values embedded in AI systems. Since most law curricula are Eurocentric, law lecturers must teach students how AI technologies could perpetuate the dependency of Africans, thereby reinforcing the knowledge superiority of their former colonial masters.

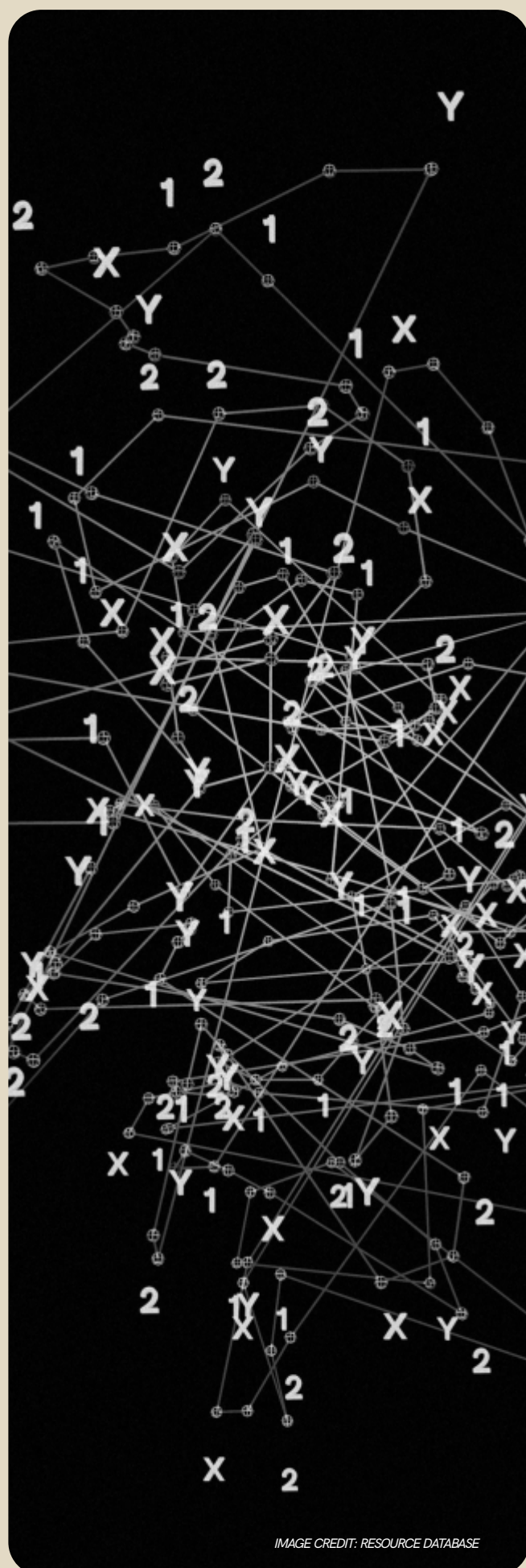


IMAGE CREDIT: RESOURCE DATABASE

How can AI governance in African countries ensure the "transformative constitutionalism" necessary to bridge economic inequality, rather than becoming a tool for worsening digital divides?

The Global North's pioneering of AI creates a digital divide by using unrepresentative data during AI's developmental stage. In recognition of the transformative potential of AI, the African Union has launched an Artificial Intelligence Strategy. Ostensibly, the AU seeks to ensure that AI technologies complement African values and promote economic development. However, the Strategy lacks legislative steps to address issues such as algorithmic prejudice, mass data harvesting, and political surveillance. For AI governance to realize "transformative constitutionalism" that bridges economic inequality and reduces digital divides, three things are required. Firstly, the AU should adopt a supranational treaty on AI monitoring and implementation, which should be domesticated and incorporated into African bills of rights. Secondly, African states must overcome key developmental challenges such as corruption and poor infrastructure, especially weak electricity, internet, and affordability. Finally, there is an urgent need to improve AI literacy. There is no point in transformative constitutionalism if people are ignorant about what needs to be transformed.

Legal Integration: Your work focuses on the integration of laws in Africa. How can AI harmonize the diverse legal systems (state, customary, and religious) that exist across the continent to create a more unified path for economic prosperity?

That is correct. I am passionate about the integration of legal orders in Africa. Unfortunately, AI will only become vital here after domestic law reforms succeed in legal harmonization. I have outlined five steps for this process: (i) Judges and legislators must accept how globalization influences Africans and produces new legal identities. (ii) States must ascertain the foundational values of indigenous laws. (iii) With emphasis on normative dialogue, judges must substitute constitutional bills of rights with the core values of indigenous African laws. (iv) Law reforms should align indigenous African values with modern values. (v) Finally, AI will assist customary laws to merge with statutory laws using the core values of indigenous laws as the foundation of this



Indigenous Knowledge: Much of AI's training data is Western-centric. How do we ensure that AI systems used in Africa respect and incorporate African customary laws and indigenous values like Ubuntu?

We can only do this by ascertaining the foundational values of indigenous laws and thereafter incorporating them into AI training datasets. Fortunately, several African firms and research collectives have developed credible LLMs that are focused on African languages and context. Lelapa AI is a prominent leader here, with its launch of InkubaLM, a multilingual model that targets low-resource African languages. These LLMs need to turn their attention to the foundational values of indigenous laws.

Could AI tools be deployed in rural customary courts to help document oral traditions and past rulings, thereby strengthening the rule of law and property rights at the grassroots level?

Yes, AI tools can certainly be deployed in rural customary courts to document oral traditions and precedents. However, the problem is finding authentic versions of customs. My field research reveals that most of the repositories of customs have died, and many traditional leaders possess questionable knowledge of indigenous laws. Nevertheless, AI can help in documenting archival records and compiling them into a central database.

You have written extensively on matrimonial property rights. How can AI help in the transparent mapping and registration of land, especially where customary and state laws clash, to secure economic freedom for women and rural dwellers?

This is a problem of legal pluralism, as state laws regulate indigenous land tenure in sometimes conflictual ways. For AI technologies to successfully assist in the mapping and registration of rural land, traditional communities need to present authentic versions of land laws.

As the Director of the Centre for Legal Integration, how do you see AI facilitating the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)? Can AI handle the complex cross-border legal challenges that currently hinder trade?

This is an interesting question because the AfCFTA is facing considerable cross-border legal hurdles. I believe AI can mitigate these hurdles by automating compliance checks across Africa's fragmented regulations. Also, it can provide intelligence for better decision-making and even reduce disputes through predictive analysis. For this to work, data quality must improve, and over-reliance on foreign AI systems must be reduced.

Artificial
Intelligence &
Public
Administration

Artificial Intelligence and the *Development* Agenda in Africa

THE CASE OF KENYA



Professor Kelvin
Kabeti Omieno
Kaimosi Friends University



Kenya, in particular, demonstrates how innovation can align with local needs. The success of mobile money systems like M-Pesa shows how countries can leapfrog traditional development.

Professor Kelvin Kabeti Omieno is an academic and technology expert specializing in information systems and digital transformation, with a strong interest in leveraging emerging technologies to drive sustainable development in Africa. He is the dean of the School of Computing and Information Technology at Kaimosi Friends University.

For a short stint, I have been engaged in academia and worked closely with emerging technologies, particularly in information systems and digital transformation. This experience has reinforced a firm conviction that least developed countries (LDCs) can achieve sustainable and inclusive growth only if they deliberately embrace technological transformation in a structured, context-sensitive manner.

"Africa must not be left behind in the Fourth Industrial Revolution" is a sentiment widely echoed by policymakers across the continent, capturing both urgency and aspiration. The African Union's digital transformation agenda similarly underscores that Africa's future will depend on how effectively it harnesses data, innovation, and intelligent systems. As Tomi Davies aptly noted, "the next big frontier is using technology to solve Africa's problems." In the same vein, Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai reminded the world that "sustainable development is about meeting human needs while ensuring the health of the environment for future generations." Though rooted in environmental advocacy, her insight applies equally to the digital age: development must remain people-centered and forward-looking.

These reflections resonate strongly today as Artificial Intelligence (AI) reshapes global development pathways. For Africa, particularly for LDCs, AI presents both immense opportunity and serious risk. As Patrick Awuah, founder of Ashesi University, has emphasized, "Africa's development will be driven by Africans solving African problems." In the same breath, Vukosi Marivate cautions, "If we do not build AI systems that understand African contexts, we risk building systems that exclude the very people they are meant to serve." This reinforces the idea that AI must be localized and aligned with development realities, rather than adopted as an imported, one-size-fits-all solution.

Across the continent, development challenges remain deeply structural, including gaps in healthcare, agriculture, education, financial inclusion, and governance. Yet Africa is also a hub of technological experimentation. Kenya, in particular, demonstrates how innovation can align with local needs. The success of mobile money systems like M-Pesa shows how countries can leapfrog traditional development stages. Within this environment, AI is no longer a futuristic concept but a practical tool addressing everyday challenges.

In rural Kenya, agriculture, the backbone of livelihoods, is increasingly affected by climate change. AI-powered platforms such as Apollo Agriculture are helping farmers make better decisions using machine learning, satellite imagery, and climate data. In regions like Makueni and Nakuru, farmers report improved yields and better access to credit through AI-driven risk assessments. However, these gains are uneven, as farmers without smartphones, connectivity, or digital literacy are often excluded, creating new inequalities.

In healthcare, AI is supporting service delivery in resource-constrained settings. Public facilities, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and development partners, are piloting AI tools to detect diseases such as tuberculosis. In clinics in Kisumu and Nairobi, these systems assist in interpreting chest X-rays and prioritizing patients. While early detection has improved outcomes, occasional inaccuracies highlight the need for human oversight.

In the financial sector, firms like Tala and Branch International use AI to assess creditworthiness based on alternative data such as mobile usage. This has expanded credit access for many in the informal economy, though concerns about transparency and algorithmic fairness remain.



Despite these advances, a critical question emerges: which path should Kenya and other LDCs take to harness AI's potential fully?

First, there is a need for an inclusive digital infrastructure. Without reliable internet, electricity, and affordable devices, AI risks deepening inequality rather than reducing it. Rural and marginalized populations must be intentionally included. Second, human capacity development is essential. AI literacy should extend beyond specialists to include farmers, healthcare workers, and policymakers. Third, strong governance and ethical regulation are crucial. Frameworks must ensure data protection, transparency, and accountability, particularly in sensitive sectors like healthcare and finance.

Fourth, local innovation must be prioritized. AI solutions should reflect African languages, cultures, and socioeconomic realities. Over-reliance on imported systems risks misalignment with local needs. Fifth, regional collaboration across African countries can strengthen data sharing, regulatory harmonization, and research capacity, reducing dependency on external technologies. Finally, AI must be integrated into broader development strategies rather than treated as a standalone solution. It should complement investments in education, healthcare, agriculture, governance, and other areas.

In conclusion, the story of AI in Africa is still unfolding. Kenya illustrates both the opportunities and tensions of this transformation. While AI is already improving productivity, inclusion, and service delivery, it also raises critical questions about inequality, governance, and dependency. The challenge for Kenya and other LDCs is not whether to adopt AI, but how to shape it to ensure it is inclusive, ethical, and aligned with development priorities. If managed effectively, AI can become not just a tool of efficiency but a catalyst for a more equitable and sustainable future.

Technology Is Just a Tool & Democracy Must Come First



Dr. Abu Bakarr Bah
Northern Illinois University

Dr. Abu Bakarr Bah is Board of Trustees Professor of Sociology at Northern Illinois University and Founding Director of the Institute for Research and Policy Integration in Africa.



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Some of our readers may be hearing about you for the first time. Who is Professor Abu Bakarr Bah?

Dr. Abu Bakarr Bah is a highly distinguished scholar at Northern Illinois University in the US. I am a Board of Trustees Professor, and before that, I was Presidential Research Professor of Sociology (2022 - 2026). I am also head of the Sociology and Criminology Department. I am the founding director of the Institute for Research and Policy Integration in Africa (IRPIA) and founding Editor-in-Chief of African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review. Additionally, I am the African Editor of Critical Sociology.

In the age of AI and new technologies, what does a tech-driven governance and political system look like?

Well, information is now practically electronic. Even more, software programs and AI tools are rapidly automating processes and, in some cases, even making decisions. To the extent that governance and political systems are about processes, decision-making, and communication, we are in the age of tech-driven governance and political systems. The degree to which this is true depends on a country's level of technological development—countries with greater access to modern technology can deploy sophisticated AI and other new technologies. In contrast, those with less technology may lag behind. At any rate, the critical question is what the implications of a tech-driven governance and political system are, especially in Africa, where technology levels are still low. It can potentially mean increasing efficiency and access—in some areas. However, there is also the risk that a significant number of (poor) people may not gain that access. Moreover, the levers and modes of accountability need to be reconsidered. Overall, automation is the key element of a tech-driven governance and political system—whether this is at the level of simply processing information or making decisions, it depends on the level of the country's technology development.

What is your opinion on tech-driven governance and democracy? How does the former influence state efficiency and democratic autonomy?

I think it is a mixed bag—it really depends on who holds the levers of technology. If access and control over technology are democratic, its impact on democracy is more likely to be on the side of efficiency rather than undermining democratic autonomy and the rights of the people. However, if technology is controlled by an anti-democratic ideology or people who are not committed to democracy, we can see diminished democratic autonomy and people's rights. In that sense, technology is a tool—and its real impact depends on how it is used.

What tradeoffs exist for the use of technology in governance systems, and do we navigate them?

The tradeoff is always in transparency and accountability, which can undermine democracy and legitimacy. To be clear, I do not mean superficial transparency, but rather transparency into the foundational algorithms and the ownership of technology. If democratic ethos is maintained and there is oversight of corporations, then democratic legitimacy can be maintained. However, if the growing use of technologies is not matched by a strong democratic ethos and corporate responsibility and oversight, especially in how data is captured and used, then the trade-off will be detrimental to democratic legitimacy, be it in elections or in people's everyday encounters with the state and corporations.

How can African countries adopt foreign technologies without losing control over their own systems?

With the current state of African dependency, this seems almost impossible—the only question is how much control they will lose. Africa is far behind in developing its own technologies. As such, a key strategy is to build multiple alliances—with Western countries, China, Russia, and other emerging powers in the Global South. In the long term, Africa needs to increase its efforts in research and development and improve its ability to acquire and domesticate technologies. In reality, dependency is an element of the international system. However, countries should work to reduce dependency by combining domestic know-how with a diverse array of global ties.

The cost of over-dependency is huge, especially in the inability to pursue long-term, nationally driven goals. But if African countries pursue the right policies, especially in terms of political stability under democratic systems of good governance, they can build capacity and eventually gain some leverage in the international system. That is the way to reduce dependency and enhance control over core national priorities.

How can new technologies be leveraged for nation-building and prosperity, especially in places like Africa?

The need for technology in Africa is huge, and it spans every area of life, so I say: just start and get going. As we know, most African countries still struggle with reliable and affordable energy. I would say that is a place to focus on, and we need to be bold and visionary, especially in terms of renewable energy, micro installations, and access points. If you cannot have proper energy, it will be difficult to move forward with any other technology. The other areas I would note are agriculture, including food processing, and communication. These are all essential for everyday well-being and effective organization.

In conflict-prone parts of the continent, can digital tools genuinely support peacebuilding?

Yes, any tool that can be used to enhance communication in a conflict setting is a good thing for peacebuilding. However, we need to be realistic about what digital tools can do—namely, communicate. The problem with most conflicts in Africa is a sense of belonging, fairness, and justice—these are political and economic issues that require a principled commitment to truly inclusive democracy and social justice. To execute these principles, we need creative institutional arrangements—then we can move to the issue of public communication and the use of digital tools as micro peacebuilding tools.

In what ways can institutions use technology to build public trust rather than doubt?

That really depends on the very nature of the state and its political system. Technology is just a tool for implementing principles and mechanisms of governance—technology does not create those things. In reality, technology is not the issue, since it is just a tool in the service of the political and economic system. So, trust rests on the foundations of inclusive democracy and social justice. If those things are not there, technology may simply augment oppression and injustice, leading to doubt and distrust. Conversely, if there is a system of inclusive democracy and social justice, technology can be a great tool to reach more people and enhance the efficiency of service delivery and people's connection to the state and society. In such a situation, technology can be used to enhance public trust.

What is Africa's future outlook like if technology truly supported freedom and shared prosperity?

That would be great, but African countries first need to enhance their technology stack and access, and develop more inclusive democracies to enhance good governance. In a way, technology can be a complement and augments, but it cannot really be the solution for the problems undermining peace and development in Africa. For now, this is a vision we can aspire to—a symbiosis of technology, freedom, and prosperity. To achieve that vision, we need to "wise up" and do the hard and honest work of creating inclusive democracies.

Any final thoughts or words that you would like to share with our readers?

Certainly, it is wonderful to think about how technology intersects with governance. It is an issue not just in Africa but across the world. The issue for Africa is the deficits in technological development and the systems of governance. These are problems that require separate solutions, and we should be cautious not to assume that technology can solve fundamental problems of good governance. I also want to note that deep down, all these challenges come back to the issue of knowledge production and use in Africa. Whether we talk of governance or technology, there is a lot of need for the kind of knowledge that is rooted in African experiences and interests. Of course, Africa does not need to start from scratch—we can always draw from the existing pool of global knowledge to carve out new ideas, techniques, and processes to enhance peace, good governance, and wellbeing in Africa. Knowledge is fundamental, and knowledge speaks to experience and values.

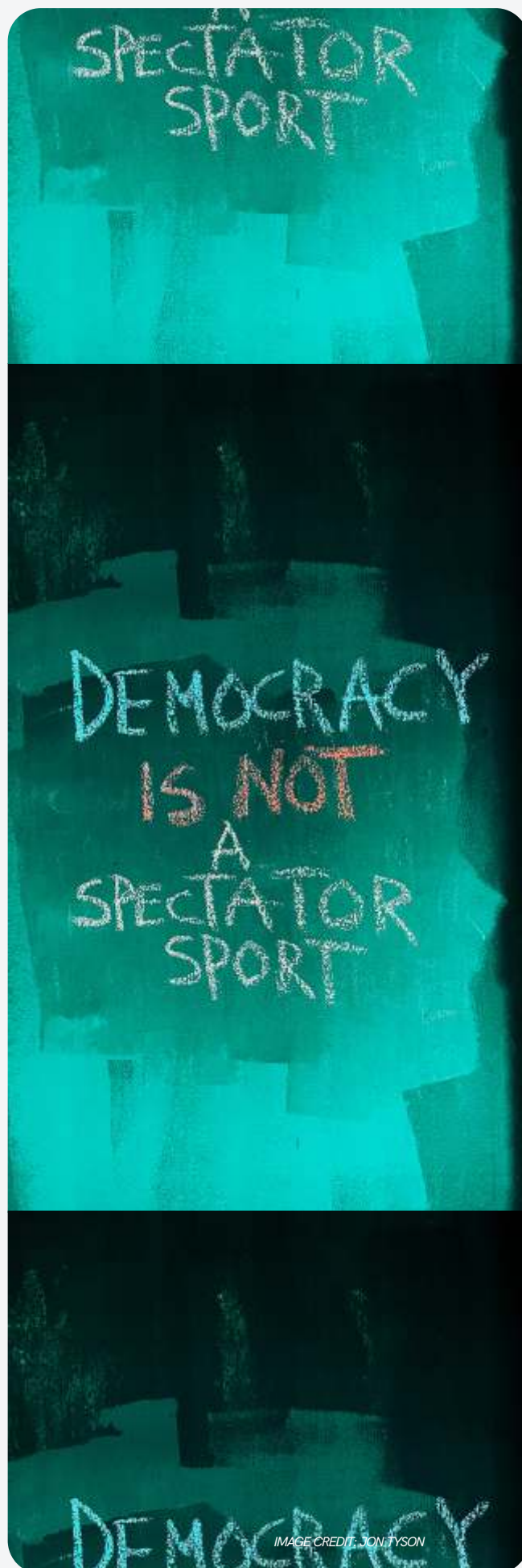
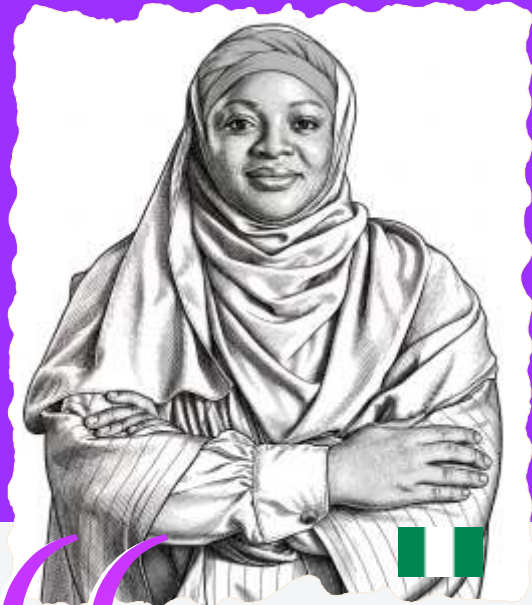


IMAGE CREDIT: JON TYSON

Governance *And* AI



CONVERSATION WITH
Dr. Azeezat Yishawu
Ministry of Youth Development, Nigeria

AI-powered tools like chatbots and local-language platforms can simplify legal information, making constitutional rights more accessible. It stands to empower citizens with knowledge to challenge abuse and demand accountability.

Dr. Azeezat Yishawu is a medical doctor and Senior Special Assistant on Youth Policy, Development, and Analysis to the Honorable Minister of Youth Development in Nigeria. Her work focuses on translating youth voices into actionable policies. Increasingly, technology and Artificial Intelligence intersect with this mission by shaping how young people engage, organize, and influence governance.

How can AI strengthen the pipeline between youth voices and government action? And, how can AI help citizens understand and defend their constitutional rights?

AI can analyze large volumes of youth feedback from surveys, social media, and consultations, helping policymakers identify trends and priorities in real time. It can also support participatory platforms that make engagement more inclusive and data-driven. Yes, AI-powered tools like chatbots and local-language platforms can simplify legal information, making constitutional rights more accessible. It stands to empower citizens with knowledge to challenge abuse and demand accountability.

How can AI amplify grassroots youth input in governance?

AI can aggregate and elevate grassroots perspectives that are often ignored. However, transparency is key; without it, such tools can be repurposed for surveillance rather than participation.

How is AI being used to undermine electoral outcomes?

AI is increasingly used to spread disinformation, manipulate public opinion, and micro-target voters with misleading content. These practices can distort democratic processes and erode trust. AI can enhance voter register audits, detect anomalies in voting patterns, and support real-time monitoring. However, its deployment must be transparent and independently verified to build trust.

How can AI close gender gaps?

AI systems must be intentionally designed to include women's data and perspectives. Supporting women in STEM and leadership ensures that AI reflects diverse realities rather than reinforcing bias.

Where is the greatest risk of AI as a tool of control? And what key reform is needed to ensure AI expands freedoms?

The greatest risk lies in unchecked surveillance such as facial recognition, data tracking, and predictive policing, especially in contexts with weak oversight. A critical reform is investment in sovereign AI infrastructure. Africa currently does not own much of the infrastructure powering AI, limiting adoption and control. Without local data centers and computing capacity, we remain dependent on external systems, which affects autonomy, innovation, and data protection. Building this infrastructure alongside rights-based governance is essential.

Which African country is getting the balance right? And what does a free AI-powered Africa look like?

Countries like Rwanda are making progress by investing in digital infrastructure and governance frameworks. The lesson is that intentional policy, investment, and capacity building can create a balanced AI ecosystem. A free and prosperous AI-powered Africa is one where technology amplifies citizen voices, protects rights, and is built on infrastructure and systems that Africans own and trust.



IMAGE CREDIT: CHIZON

Should Africa Be Concerned about Artificial Intelligence?



Professor Damilola Taiye Agbalajobi is a Nigerian political scientist whose work spans gender, governance, conflict, and urban political transformations, with extensive publications, international research collaborations, and leadership roles in academia.



Owning data is not about isolation; it is about fair participation in the global digital economy.

**Professor Damilola
Taiye Agbalajobi**
Obafemi Awolowo University

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a future idea. It is already shaping how people work, learn, save money, receive healthcare, and even how governments make decisions. From mobile banking apps to facial recognition systems, AI is quietly becoming part of everyday life across Africa. The real question, however, is not whether AI will affect Africa. It already does. The real concern is how it will affect Africa—and who will benefit. Africa's concern with AI can be understood through three connected realities: the need to participate actively, the need to avoid exploitation, and the need to own our data.

A Familiar Pattern Africa Cannot Afford to Repeat

History offers Africa a painful lesson. During the Industrial Revolution, the continent was largely left out and became a supplier of raw materials rather than an owner of industry. When the internet age arrived, Africa struggled to catch up while consuming technologies built elsewhere. Today, we are entering the age of AI. If Africa is not careful, history may repeat itself—this time at a much faster and more damaging scale. AI is not neutral. Those who design it, train it, and control its rules shape who benefits from it. If Africa only consumes AI products without understanding or shaping them, the continent risks becoming a passive market rather than an active creator.

First Concern: Africa Must Participate Actively in AI

Africa cannot afford to sit on the sidelines while others define the rules of AI. Participation means more than using AI-powered applications. It means understanding how AI works, developing local talent, and being involved in creating the tools we rely on. If Africa does not understand the protocols, programming, and systems behind AI, we will be forced to accept technologies designed for other societies, economies, and values. Today, fintech is growing rapidly across Africa. Many households use digital banking and payment apps daily. But an important question must be asked: who owns these systems? Who controls the technology, the rules, and the data? When applications that millions depend on are owned and managed elsewhere, Africa remains vulnerable. Systems can be altered, restricted, or withdrawn, and users have little control. This is why participation in development—not just usage—is essential.

Second Concern: Avoiding Exploitation in the AI Era

AI introduces a new form of exploitation—one that is less visible but deeply powerful. When Africa relies heavily on technologies built in the developed world, value flows outward while risks remain local. Data is extracted, profits are repatriated, and African users become sources of raw digital material rather than beneficiaries of innovation.



This form of dependence can be described as digital exploitation. When people freely give away data without ownership, control, or fair value, it creates a modern version of dependency—what some may even describe as voluntary digital servitude. To avoid this, Africa must move beyond being a consumer society. Children in many developed countries begin learning to code and design applications as early as age five. Africa must take this seriously. Learning to code, program, and design systems should not be optional or elitist—it must become foundational. Co-creation, co-production, and co-ownership are the only ways to escape exploitation. If Africa does not help build AI systems, it will always remain at the mercy of those who do.

Opportunity: Building, Not Just Using, AI Technologies

Despite these risks, AI presents enormous opportunities for Africa. AI is already transforming agriculture by improving crop yields, healthcare by supporting doctors during complex procedures, and security by detecting cross-border crimes. African researchers are also using AI to manage data and find solutions to long-standing development challenges. AI can help Africa leapfrog traditional barriers—but only if the continent invests in skills, infrastructure, and local innovation. Africa is blessed with natural resources, yet we do not manufacture the chips required for AI technologies.

This must change. Developing the capacity to produce chips and related infrastructure is not just an economic issue; it is a strategic necessity. Skill development at all levels—technical, scientific, and managerial—must be prioritized. AI touches every sector: education, energy, health, transportation, fashion, entertainment, security, and governance. Africa must not be left out of the benefits.

Third Concern: Data Sovereignty Is Non-Negotiable

Perhaps the most critical issue is data sovereignty. Most applications used in Nigeria and across Africa store data outside the continent. Platforms like AI chat tools and digital services operate data centers beyond African control. This means Africa is giving away its data—often for free. Data is power. It has implications for economic independence, privacy, and national security. When a country does not control its data, it loses control over decisions that shape its future. Africa must invest in local data centers, digital infrastructure, and strong data protection laws. Owning data is not about isolation; it is about fair participation in the global digital economy.

AI also presents a unique opportunity to improve governance in Africa.

AI systems can help track public spending, detect irregularities, and reduce corruption. Algorithms already exist that make tax evasion harder while improving revenue collection without placing additional burdens on ordinary citizens. In public policy, AI can assist governments in allocating resources more fairly and efficiently. In border security, healthcare delivery, and public administration, AI has already shown a positive impact. However, these benefits will only materialize if policies are intentionally designed with transparency, accountability, and public interest at the center.

Education: The Foundation for Africa's AI Future

To ensure Africa is not left behind, education must lead the way. Universities, schools of technology, and training institutions must integrate AI education—not just usage, but creation and production. Africa has talent. With the right investment, the continent can not only meet local needs but also export skills globally. In using AI, Africa must be concerned with the ethical use of AI, which must be given priority at all levels of learning. Lastly, inclusivity is very important so as not to further disadvantage already marginalized groups. Hence, boys and girls, men and women, rich and poor, and even persons with disabilities, must be given the opportunity AI provides.

Conclusion: Shape AI or Be Shaped by It

Africa's concern with AI is ultimately about choice. Will Africa actively participate or remain passive? Will it avoid exploitation or deepen dependency? Will it own its data or give away its future? AI is inevitable. Marginalization is not. The decisions Africa makes today will determine whether AI becomes a tool for empowerment or another chapter of missed opportunity.

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