

EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

DAMAS NDERUMAKI

DANIEL EL-NOSHOKATY

NOVEMBER 2019

Digitalization in East Africa

Connectivity, the use of internet services and their implications for the people



From 7th to 10th of November 2019 the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and The Launch Pad held a conference on Digitalization in East Africa. The Event was attended by 80 participants from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. This fruitful conference started with an introductory opening session for all participants followed by four panels where each participant choose between two topics.

The conference was opened by the KAS representative in Tanzania, Mr. Daniel El-Noshokaty. He welcomed his colleagues from Kenya, Dr. Jan Cernicky and Mathias Kamp from Uganda, the invited experts and all the guests present. He gave a brief overview of why the topic is current and important in the future, but also reminded that digitalization can only lead to positive changes when people's development is the focus of thought, KAS wants to accompany this process and therefore organized

a conference in Uganda last year. Next year, this series will be continued in Kenya.

It was also important for him to work out that digitization was a very universally used term that had to be filled with topics. For that reason, it was decided that this year's conference should focus on four topics. The aim of the conference was also to draw up concrete recommendations on how digitization in these four areas could lead to a positive change in the living conditions of people. For each of the four topics, experts from the three countries were invited to work out these proposals together with the participants. There are two experts per topic and these are:

Michael Niyitegeka and John Walumbego: Human Capital: Education & Health.

Richard Lema and Tariq Dhiybi: e-Commerce and Mobile Money solutions.

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Henry Kulaya and Zuweina Farah: Digitalization as an engine for employment:

Carol Ndosu and Cecilia Maundu: Digitalization as a tool against inequality and empowerment for women.

After the conference is a continuation of the event in Uganda in 2018, another goal should be the exchange between the experts and the participants. KAS sees the need to create a platform for better exchange between experts in each country and between countries themselves. Digitalisation knows no borders and we therefore have to act regionally and globally.

Mattias Kamp, the KAS resident representative in Uganda, gave all participants a brief summary of the conference last year and reiterated KAS 'motivation to tackle this issue. It is not about KAS itself developing solutions, but the Foundation has a global network and a global expertise that it can and wants to use to provide spaces to address the issues of digitization. It is also about the further development of the topics that KAS is working on anyway, because these can be treated more effectively with the means of digitization and thus brought to positive results for the people.

Next, Dr. Jan Cernicky, KAS resident representative in Kenya, shortly introduced the participants to the nine experts and their careers. In addition to the eight experts mentioned above for the four specific subject areas, this is also Edwin Masanta, who as keynote speaker should give an introduction to the state of digitization in East Africa for all participants. The presentation of the participants and the individual topics that they would work on during the conference also served as a guide for the participants, who then decided to take part in two of the four topics, as they were conducted at the same time.

This was followed by an introductory lecture by Mr Edwin Masanta of ICDL on digi-

tal infrastructure and internet access in the East African countries. He gave a general introduction to the topic and the current developments, but also gave an overview of the challenges that still exist in the countries of East Africa. These include a lack of infrastructure, a low level of education, education systems and government agencies that are having a hard time switching to digital services for citizens. Mr. Masanta thanked the KAS for organizing the event and invited the participants to actively participate in the discussions.

All participants could then decide on one of the two simultaneous thematic workshops. They split up in such a way that two groups of almost the same size were created and thus 40 people each took part in the thematic workshop. At the beginning of the workshop, the experts gave an input that served as an introduction. After that, they were free to design the workshops, which led to very dynamic discussions with the participants, different forms of group work as well as, questions and answers.



At the end of each thematic workshop, the experts and participants were invited to come up with recommendations for the topic they were working on. The aim was to work out how digitization can help to focus more on these topics in East Africa and to bring them to a successful conclusion.

At the end of the conference, all the participants came together again and the experts briefly presented their respective workshops and recommendations. After

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these brief summaries of the individual topics, all participants had another opportunity to ask questions or comment. As a result of this discussion at the end of the conference, it was agreed that each participant was responsible for passing on the learned knowledge to their respective networks.

The KAS observations and feedback from the participants showed that the conference was a successful event in which the topics worked on could be further developed, contacts and networks were created and all participants are looking forward to the conference in Kenya next year.



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