The information and commentary expressed here are the selection and views of the scanning organisation and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Rockefeller Foundation.
The philanthropy of Africa’s 40 richest

Africa’s 40 richest people have yet to make a mark in global philanthropy, but some of them are making notable efforts in their home countries. While conducting intensive research for Forbes’ inaugural list of Africa’s 40 Richest, [Forbes] also probed the philanthropic donations of the continent’s wealthiest people. While Africans in general are an extremely charitable lot, only a small fraction of its 40 richest people are noteworthy givers. Some of the more significant givers include:

Below are some of the more significant givers among Africa’s 40 richest:

- **Strive Masiyiwa**: The Zimbabwean telecoms tycoon and founder of Econet Wireless is one of Africa’s biggest givers. In 1996 Strive and his wife, Tsitsi Masiyiwa founded the Capernaum Trust, a Zimbabwe-registered Christian charity that supports over 28,000 orphaned Zimbabwean children. The organization provides bursary awards, scholarships, food packs and medical assistance to the children. The charity also funds the construction of libraries and other resource centres where beneficiaries can access educational materials.

- **Theophilus Danjuma**: Nigeria’s former defence minister is the founder and chairman of South Atlantic Petroleum, one of the country’s leading oil exploration companies. Last year he endowed his T.Y Danjuma Foundation with $100 million- the largest in Nigerian philanthropic history. The foundation makes grants to Nigerian-based non-governmental organizations that promote causes in education, free healthcare, policy advocacy and poverty alleviation.

- **Aliko Dangote**: Africa’s wealthiest man recently embraced philanthropy. Over the last one year the Nigerian-born commodities tycoon has given $15million to a Nigerian SME fund which grants low-interest loans to local businesses. In May, his Dangote foundation partnered with the World Economic Forum to establish a fellowship program aimed at grooming young leaders from Africa. Dangote donated $2 million to the programme. He has also recently given away millions to healthcare and educational causes as well as to communities that have been afflicted by natural disasters.

- **Nicky Oppenheimer**: South Africa’s richest man is custodian of the legacy of his fathers, Ernest and Harry Oppenheimer. He currently oversees the operations of the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, a charity his father, Harry, founded in 1958. The foundation gives away over $6 million annually in scholarships and bursaries to select South African students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Oppenheimer is also an avid supporter of environmental conservation causes.

- **Raymond Ackerman** is the founder of the Pick N Pay Group, one of South Africa’s largest supermarket chains with some 870 stores spread across the country. He gives back through The Ackerman Family Educational Trust, which provides scholarships and bursaries for about 60 South African students every year. The trust, which is managed by his wife, Wendy, also helps the mentally and physically disabled. In 2001 he partnered with the University of Cape Town to found the Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurial Development, an institution which grooms young budding entrepreneurs at centres in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The academy’s fees are highly subsidized because of Ackerman’s funding.

- **The Sawiris family**: In 2001 Onsi Sawiris, the patriarch of the Sawiris family business dynasty of Egypt founded of the Sawiris Foundation For Social Development, a charity which provides micro credit to Egyptian entrepreneurs and grants scholarships to outstanding Egyptian students in tertiary institutions. Onsi’s sons, Naguib, Samih and Nassef all sit on the board of the foundation. The foundation also funds an annual prize for the best of Egyptian literature.

Source:

**Web-based inequality database resource**

A web-based initiative led by researchers at the Institute for New Economic Thinking at Oxford Martin School is providing crucial evidence to media, politicians and policy makers across the globe. The World Top Incomes Database provides access to a wealth of data on the distribution of top incomes in more than twenty five countries across the globe. Users can select different types of data to build their own graphs and charts in order to see how much of the nation’s income is held by the top 1% or more. Website co-author and James Martin Fellow, Facundo Alvaredo has highlighted some of the key trends in the world’s top incomes:
This is a particularly handy resource, given that, according to Moises Naim, editor of Foreign Policy magazine: 'tolerance of inequality' and 'respect for politicians, experts and the wealthy' have had a bad year in 2011 (see here http://www.elpais.com/articulo/english/Five/ideas/that/died/in/2011/elpeputec/20111211elpeng_5/Ten He states: Economic inequality and social injustice have always existed, and are not going away anytime soon. But in 2011, the idea that they are inevitable and must be accepted came under serious attack. The economic crisis in Europe and the United States highlighted something that we already knew, but that had not gained the political potency it did this year: too few have too much, and too many have too little. There's nothing new in this, but now, the statistics, and the reality, of economic inequities are on everybody's minds. And, as we were so brutally reminded by the death of Mohamed Bouazizi, the young fruit seller who set himself on fire in a small town in Tunisia, anger is no longer just about economic disparities, but also about injustice and lack of dignity. Millions of people throughout the Arab world took to the streets and overthrew dictators, refusing to accept the idea that their future would look like their past. Inequality and injustice will not disappear, but it became much more difficult to defend them in 2011.

This was also a bad year for those empowered by voters, knowledge or money. We learned that many rulers do not have either the power or the ability to make fundamental decisions, that each famous economist has a different explanation and solution for the crisis, and that many of the wealthy (individuals as well as companies) who contributed to the current debacle are living largely unburdened by the consequence of their actions. In 2011, the authority of governments, experts and business leaders was hit hard. We don't believe them, we don't trust them. And authority depends on legitimacy and credibility.

See also here http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_49041236_1_1_1_1_1,00.htm for an OECD report on the importance of building social cohesion and the role of inequality in developing societies. The OECD presents compelling evidence of the link between social cohesion and various development outcomes: 'Clearly, social cohesion and the absence of socially divisive influences contribute to desirable development outcomes such as growth, poverty reduction, stability, peace and conflict resolution. What is more, social cohesion helps make policy more effective. If a society integrates minorities, has a relatively strong sense of belonging, and provides opportunities for upward social mobility, the effectiveness of its public policies will obviously be greater than in socially fragmented societies' This intuitively appealing statement is supported by empirical evidence. For instance:

- For a sample of 74 developing countries social mobility was found to have a significant impact on GDP growth.
- For a sample of 51 developed and developing countries trust (social capital) was found to interact significantly with investment in both physical and human capital.
- In a sample of Indian villages low-caste households living in low-caste dominated villages had a higher income than those in villages dominated by a high caste (social exclusion)

Social cohesion is therefore both an end as well as a means to achieve development aspirations. At the same time, it needs to be recognised that structural economic change, shifting wealth and a higher growth trajectory can influence cohesion (and development) in both a negative and positive fashion. For instance, higher growth and advances in human development can reduce social exclusion (through job creation and social mobility), but also lead to greater inequality.

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**ECONOMIC ISSUES**

**South Africa’s Fairtrade sales set to increase eightfold**

Retail sales of Fairtrade products in SA are set to increase by over eight times as a
result of Kraft Foods SA’s achieving Fairtrade certification for the country’s best-loved chocolate slab, Cadbury Dairy Milk. The Fairtrade certification system ensures better working and living conditions for small-scale farmers, farm workers and their communities by building relationships between consumers and producers that tackle inequalities in global trade and increase market access for groups of smallholder producers. Fairtrade focuses primarily on exports from developing countries to developed countries for goods such as coffee, cocoa, cotton, tea and wine.

In 2010 South Africans spent an estimated R18.4 million (US$2.2 million) on Fairtrade products, a dramatic increase from 2009’s R5.7 million, while global sales reached EUR4.36 billion - a 27% increase from 2009. It is estimated that more than 1.4 million Fairtrade-certified Cadbury Dairy Milk Plain slabs will be consumed in SA in 2011.


As this story illustrates there is huge potential for Fairtrade, and similar initiatives, to focus not only on developed world consumption, but also developing world consumption - a leap-frog, fast-track idea/endavour for CSR and aid types as the world’s wealth and consumption patterns are shifting.

Seven trends likely to shape African agriculture in the coming years

In a recent research report, titled African Agriculture: This other Eden, Renaissance Capital identified a number of factors that are likely to influence African agriculture in the years ahead. A summary below:

1. Increasing demand from China: China’s meat consumption has increased significantly over the past decades. In 2001, the average Chinese consumed around 43 kg of meat every year. Over the following ten years, annual per capita consumption rose to approximately 54 kg, a 22% increase. More meat consumption has led to a rising demand for soya beans – a popular source of feed for livestock. China, however, cannot supply its own need for soya beans. While Chinese soya bean production has decreased, domestic consumption has skyrocketed from 28.3 million tonnes in 2001 to 71.6 million tonnes in 2011. This higher demand has been met through imports.

In addition to soya beans, China’s ability to be self-sufficient in the production of other crops is also likely to be reversed in a dramatic fashion over the next few years. The past two years has seen a minimal increase in the harvested area for wheat and rice, while yields for all three grains have also only seen a marginal improvement. Rising urbanisation is putting increasing pressure on farmland. It is not only China that will import more grains. Similar dietary changes are underway in a number of other emerging economies. As demand rises, internal constraints in a number of geographies are becoming apparent. This is a good opportunity for Africa, which has significant farming potential, to increase its exports of agricultural commodities such as maize, palm oil and other crops.

2. Food security

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) believes that 70 million hectares of additional farmland is required to feed the world’s 9 billion people by 2050. The Americas could most likely fulfil this need alone with Canada, the US, Brazil and Argentina providing the bulk of additional supply. However, the issue of food security is not only about basic needs and how to fulfil those needs – it is also about the risks attached to achieving it. In common with the oil & gas industry, there comes a point where an over-reliance on too few suppliers for a country’s energy needs makes it hunt out alternative sources of energy. A similar need to diversify supply will likely arise in agriculture, and this represents a major opportunity for Africa to provide the world with food security.

3. Resource nationalism

Although resource nationalism is often associated with the extractive industries, Renaissance expects the issue to also come to the fore in African agriculture. Resource nationalism is not always entirely driven by anti-foreign sentiment. High prices help, too. The electoral success of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and the recently elected Sata government in Zambia might never have materialised had it not been for the prevailing high prices of oil, gas and copper over the past decade. High prices for agricultural goods, the need to secure alternative food supplies and the sensitivities of access to and ownership of land, all suggest resource nationalism in agriculture is likely to become a more prominent theme in the years ahead.

4. Will urbanisation lead to farm mechanisation?

It estimated that 60% (currently 40%) of the continent’s population will live in cities by 2050. As more and more workers flood into urban environments and readily available pool of cheap workers disappear from the countryside, farmers are forced into a straightforward labour-capital shift. In short, farms must mechanise if they are to maintain
their competitive position. Smallholder farmers, too, must make a decision: if they dedicate their supply of labour to generating urban-derived income, what do they do with their land? Another way to look at this conundrum takes the form of a question: is the rise of the superfarm inevitable?

5. Superfarms
The rise of the superfarm is a relatively modern phenomenon. There are possibly fewer than 100 industrial groups that own, lease or operate farms of over 100,000 ha. Do economies of scale exist in agriculture? The purchasing power on inputs or selling power on output that comes with a 100,000 ha farm is likely to be no greater than a 1,000 ha farm. This is accentuated by two factors: first, managing 100,000 ha under a single corporate umbrella is more likely to result in managerial dis-economies of scale; and second: 100 farmers managing 1,000 ha plots each can easily form a co-operative, which will provide them with all the purchasing benefits of the superfarm and none of the dis-economies of scale. However, many superfarms exist because they act as channels for investment capital. In short, while managerial or operating economies of scale might not exist, financial economies do.

Ultimately, the debate over superfarms comes down to money. How does one create a conduit for capital for investment in agriculture? Can smallholders provide that conduit? If so, it would be reasonable to assume they had a future in this most strategic of industries. However, the volatility of food prices, the rapid urbanisation that characterises large parts of our planet, the relative undercapitalisation of the sector and the sheer variability of the agricultural labour force in its current form, all suggest that in creating those conduits for capital, superfarms are likely to play a hugely important role in attracting investment to the sector.

6. Sustainability
One of the overriding issues for humanity is that every civilisation with an urban heartland has been built upon the availability of food and water. In fact, it is the existence of those food and water resources, which has allowed urban societies to flourish. However, over time, every single one of those civilisations, societies and states has collapsed because its depleted and exhausted hinterlands could not supply its cities with their food and water needs. The collapse of food-supply systems that support urban societies has been a permanent issue since urban centres were founded. Renaissance anticipates a great deal of new thinking on sustainability in agriculture, and expects Africa to lead much of that new thinking.

7. The future of aid
African food aid will likely be transformed, too. Renaissance says that many aid agencies operating on the continent are setting agendas that hamper commercial development. The idea that some aid agencies are seeking to transform themselves into commercial enterprises highlights the new thinking that abounds in Africa. Traditional methods of delivering aid are likely to become redundant in the decades ahead.

A summary of the Renaissance Capital report can be found here http://www.renasset.com/library/friday-ram/detail/article/this-other-eden.html
See here http://www.howwemadeitinafrica.com/why-brazil-benefited-from-chinas-rising-appetite-for-meat-and-how-africa-can-too/13670/ for a related article on how Africa could benefit from the rising demand for meat in China
See here http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2011/11/28/china-in-africa-one-for-the-future/#axzz1f1tSqQbG for an opposing argument with data stating that Africa could continue remaining a bit player in Beijing’s food security strategy

Entrepreneurs in the manufacturing sector are ‘ageing and dying’
South Africa’s factory owners are a dying breed. New research likely to give grey hairs to anyone hoping to reindustrialise South Africa paints a picture of a rapidly ageing community fast giving up hope of selling its factories once its members retire because of the dwindling number of buyers willing to take on the difficult life of a factory owner.

The grim findings are contained in the results of the first Small and Medium Enterprise Growth Index, (pdf) a longitudinal study following the travails of 500 small businesses with between 10 and 50 workers. The study cannot yet describe a trend, but the snapshot provided contains little doubt that South Africa’s ageing manufacturers are not being replenished by a new generation.
A large majority of small manufacturing business owners are over 50 years old. This, in itself, is not necessarily worrying. Chris Darroll, chief executive of the Small Business Project, a Johannesburg-based think-tank and research outfit that conducts the growth index, said its research confirms that entrepreneurs are not, as the popular myth wants it, “bright young things” who throw caution to the wind and start businesses as soon as they leave the school gates. As in other countries, South African business owners are mature adults with years of mostly corporate experience who start businesses in the middle of their lives. But the index indicated that those who do so shun the manufacturing sector.

Less than a fifth of factory owners are under the age of 40, compared with the third who are over 60, many of whom are beyond retirement age. And they are not a happy bunch. “Manufacturers were... reeling from increased input prices, particularly in relation to rising electricity and fuel costs, and the rising cost of imported components. Many also express a distinct lack of confidence in the long-term future of manufacturing, and very limited prospects for entry by new entrepreneurs,” said the report.

One of the main points in the index is that: “A quarter of manufacturing panelists identify inflexible labour regulations as a critical barrier to employment. Over half, 56%, report that labour regulation is a major barrier to business.”. Labour inflexibility seems to be far less of a problem in other sectors. Only 13% of the business services sector and 16% of tourism businesses see the labour regime as a problem. But labour rigidity is just one ingredient of what economist Iraj Abedian describes as a “lethal cocktail” of factors killing South Africa’s manufacturing sector.

But Abedian, whose firm Pan African Investment and Research Services conducts the Manufacturers Growth Index, said South Africa has unique exacerbating factors. The pool of skilled artisans and professionals out of which factory owners develop has shrunk as a result of an education system that has degenerated rapidly, reinforced by a black economic empowerment strategy that essentially prematurely retired engineers who ended up in Australia or Ghana.”

Without small factories to supply inputs, components and maintenance services, mega-projects lose their ability to stimulate the economy and become “imported white elephants” that play havoc with the country’s balance of payments. Neva Makgetla, economist at the department of economic development, agrees that manufacturing jobs are key to the government’s new growth path. “One job created in manufacturing can create several in the retail and service sector, but not necessarily the other way around. Makgetla said there is recognition in government of the difficulties faced by manufacturers. The department of trade and industry and the treasury are working on a “package of measures to deal with the question”.

Abedian said the problem is way beyond the reach of government. “It’s about creating a social understanding within the broader society, within the media, the engineering fraternity and, among others, the government.”

See here http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=161435 for a related article about a new consortium that aims to address the poor record of growth and survival among SA’s small businesses.

**POLITICAL ISSUES**

South Africa: “The best never happens, and the worst never happens.”


Among the many questions I’m asked once people realise I’m a nasty hack who follows politicos around for a living, is “how the hell do you put up with Julius? [Malema the now disciplined leader of the ANC Youth League] Like why haven’t you gone up to him just put your fist through his face?” To be honest, there have been times. Sometimes I just want to throw my hands up. You probably already know that when it comes to our economy, job creation and business, I’m very much like Marvin, the Paranoid Android. I’m sooo depressed. Depressed enough to just want to cry.

Every day I drive past a rubbish dump, sometimes it’s after gym, still bright and early in the morning, sometimes on my way home from work. Every day, no matter rain or shine, early or late, I see the people who haunt me. It’s the unemployed,
desperate men in the prime of life, between 25 and 50, sitting on the pavement. Doing nothing. Sometimes they may be clustered around a newspaper, usually one of them has a smoke dripping from his mouth. Some are in jeans, others in blue uniforms. Every day all they're hoping for is just one job, something that will get them some money.

These are people who are strong enough not to fall into the traps of addiction and crime, strong enough to somehow still have self-respect, despite not being able to fend for themselves and their families. They're not blind like the Zimbabwean beggars, they're not angry like the Malema followers on the "economic freedom" march. And they're not just misguided like those who think everything will be okay if we just abolish the property clause in the Constitution. These people want nothing more than a dry bed, a meal in their stomach with the promise of another one tomorrow, and maybe, if it's not asking too much, one scud of beer on a Friday night. And they want to be able to say they did it themselves.

It's not a lot. And yet they are unable to. And there is no prospect of them being able to. This is why I get depressed. This is why I worry that my child will face a future of being an elite (being white, and hopefully well-educated) pretty much guarantees that. And that's a comment on the momentum of economic apartheid, not a comment on his brains or mine) in a country that is angry and decomposing. As hope vanishes, all that is left is everything else that was in Pandora's box.

I worry too about our state intelligence minister who doesn't feel that he has to apologise to us for having a drugs trafficker as a wife, but feels he can say that anyone opposed to that stupid Info Bill is a foreign spy. Go jump, Sir. You think you are better than everyone, you think that being a minister, or being close to Zuma makes you more than just a citizen. All the president is, is first citizen. It's why we're all citizens and not subjects. It's why we don't have a Queen but a Constitution. And you think you are the King? That you have the right to decide everything for us? You don't, and you bloody well won't either, when it comes to it.

And then there's Malema. A man who claims every possible right he can dream up. And then idolises Muammar Gaddafi. I mean really. How stupid do you think we are? Before Gaddafi was killed, an ANC Youth League leader wrote on Twitter "Gaddafi's money is Gaddafi's money". His money was far more ill-gotten than any white male American president's. I wanted to stand up, find a hilltop and shout and scream. Because clearly rational argument, facts, logic doesn't matter. Identity is still the only thing that matters.

Packing for Perth yet? Here's why I'm not.

Zuma is the top dog of our politics. In July, Cosatu held its central committee (which is an immensely clumsy title for what it is, a meeting of its top brass between conferences). When Zuma came in to speak, there was silence. It was near absolute. No one said a thing, no one clapped – it was really quite a moment. It was a clear message, we don't like you, we feel cheated, fix it.

And, to a large extent, he has. He has acted on the Arms Deal, Bheki Cele, Sicelo Shiceka and Oilgate. He has complied with the Public Protector's recommendations, obeyed the courts, and generally behaved as a first citizen should.

Part of the reason he did all of this was to ensure his own political survival. And that's my point. If he hadn't done these things, he would be weaker than he currently is. It's a sign that our democracy works. It's imperfect. You don't necessarily want God choosing your chief justice. But you do want a chief justice to realise when his time is up and that he should step down. You do want a president who reacts to democratic forces, and changes his behaviour as a result.

In short, our society is working. There is a huge outcry about the Info Bill, and everyone has an opinion on the issue. And government, the ANC, the national executive committee, whichever is really in charge, has been forced to take notice. The outcome isn't certain just yet, but the fight is happening, there is a real contest.

This sums up our politics generally. It is becoming a more contested space. The DA is gaining, opposition parties are learning the art of working together, and that is good news. It has several effects. It pushes the ANC to think more carefully. It also forces it to be more disciplined – one of the reasons Malema is currently in so much trouble is because of what he's said about whites. And the less action the ANC takes on those sorts of elements, the more it will be punished at the ballot box. Helen Zille calls it the "realignment of our politics". She's not wrong on that.

Jan Smuts once said that in South Africa, "the best never happens, and the worst never happens". He's been proved right so far. For us, for me, the best is certainly not happening. But the worst isn't happening either. And I'm pretty convinced it won't. We're too big, too complex a country for that. We are not Zimbabwe in 1980. We have forces that move, compete, oppose, contest and, crucially, change. And will continue to do so.
So this Christmas, I'm reaching for another beer. It's the right thing to do.

**Angola 'loses' US$32bn**

Angola’s government must account for US$32bn missing from state coffers in a country with widespread poverty despite the nation’s vast oil wealth, New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a report recently.

Human Rights Watch said the missing money was identified by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a December report and is believed to be linked to Angola’s state oil company, Sonangol. It includes US$7.1bn transferred into escrow accounts overseas and US$24.9bn that appear as “an unexplained discrepancy in government accounts”. The IMF said the money disappeared between 2007 and last year, and amounted to 25% of the country’s gross domestic product. The missing funds were discovered during checks instituted by the IMF as a precondition for a US$1.4bn loan.

Human Rights Watch had previously identified more than US$4bn in oil revenue that went missing from government accounts between 1997 and 2002. That money never was recovered.

“Angola’s government has taken credit for improving transparency,” said Arvind Ganesan, business and human rights director at Human Rights Watch. “But the disappearance of US$32bn raises serious questions about its efforts and underscores the need for public accountability.”

Source: [http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.asp?id=161574](http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.asp?id=161574)

**Social Issues**

**Big prize for HIV test – incentivising behaviour change**

Maureen Janse, from the Western Cape town of St Helena Bay, not only knows her HIV status - she is R50 000 (±US$6000) richer for getting tested. Her name was entered into a draw in the Western Cape’s Know Your Status & Win campaign, launched last month. The province’s residents were encouraged to have an HIV test and stand a chance to win one of five prizes of R10 000 (±US$1200) or the grand prize of R50 000.

At first Janse wanted to remain anonymous but on 14 December the mother of two sent Western Cape Premier Helen Zille a spontaneous SMS to say: “I thought it would be good to have my name known to the media to encourage others also to test.” Zille said indications were that the campaign had increased the number of people getting tested. “This was a pilot programme to test the effectiveness of programmes aimed at incentivising behaviour change as part of the provincial government’s longer-term strategy to reduce the burden of disease in Western Cape through promoting wellness and preventing illness,” said Zille.

Zille drew criticism and praise for yet another controversial campaign this week - the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Project. Fourteen girls received bursaries for getting good marks - and not falling pregnant while living in “an area in which there is a high prevalence of teenage pregnancies”.


**TB-Fighting African rats head to Mozambique**

A Belgian organisation in Tanzania has developed an innovative way of diagnosing tuberculosis using specially trained rats. The man behind the idea of using African giant pouched rats to quite literally sniff out tuberculosis (TB) is Bart Weetjens. Weetjens established APOPO (Anti-Personnel Land Mines Detection Product Development Program) in Tanzania, after he had the idea of using rats to clear Mozambique, Tanzania and other countries of the landmines left after conflicts.

APOPO has now managed to train rats to accurately identify the TB virus in human sputum samples and, after successful trials earlier this year, is set to take its cost-effective, virus-detecting rodents to Mozambique, a country with a high TB incidence of an estimated 431 cases per 100 000 people. In Southern African countries TB is particularly fatal when it is able to attack immune systems that have been already severely weakened by diseases such as HIV and AIDS. One crucial battle in overcoming TB is early detection in order that the spread of the disease can be abated.

In Tanzania, APOPO has been using rats for second-line screenings. This project has increased new case detection rates by over 40% and rats can evaluate up to 40 sputum samples in just seven minutes. A skilled lab technician, on the other hand, would take an entire day to process 40
samples using the accepted detection method of microscopy.

The concept is simple: rats smell a series of samples dishes in which human sputum has been lined up for evaluation. They identify samples that contain TB bacteria by scratching at the sample dish. Previously unidentified samples, if pinpointed by two rats or more, are then confirmed by scientists using microscopy. Samples that are positive with TB are returned to the hospitals who then inform the associated patient(s) of the diagnosis and issue treatment.

In the short term, APOPO aims to significantly increase the rate of new TB case findings in Mozambique by replicating the success of their TB Detection Program in Tanzania. The first phase of this new project will involve implementing collaboration agreements, establishing an operational TB detection facility, and evaluating the efficacy of the established operation. If successful, APOPO's giant rats may help curb the spread of the age old disease in Mozambique and prove to be indispensable warriors in the battle against TB.


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**TECHNOLOGY ISSUES**

African Development Bank launches the Open Data for Africa platform

The African Development Bank Group (AfDB), in partnership with [Knoema](http://www.knoema.com), has launched an Open Data for Africa platform aimed at significantly increasing access to quality data necessary for managing and monitoring development results in African countries, including the MDGs. The platform will also serve as a knowledge centre for collecting, accessing, and sharing data and data-driven content. The initiative enhances and underpins the AfDB’s strategy to improve data collection and dissemination in Africa, and to promote statistical development in its regional member countries.

The Open Data for Africa platform also responds to a number of important global and regional initiatives to scale up the availability of quality data on Africa and so foster evidence-based decision-making, public accountability, and good governance. The initiative forms part of the worldwide effort to strengthen statistical capacity, articulated in the Busan Action Plan for Statistics (BAPS), which was endorsed by the international community at the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which took place in Busan, Korea, from November 28 to December 1, 2011.

Open Data for Africa provides users with access to a wide range of development data on Africa managed by the AfDB and other regional and international partners. It also facilitates the collection, analysis, and sharing of data on emerging and crucial development topics such as food security, gender equality, and climate change. The platform will offer a unique opportunity for AfDB staff, policymakers, analysts, researchers, business leaders, and investors around the world to gain access to reliable and timely data on Africa. Users can visualize socioeconomic indicators over a period of time, utilize presentation-ready graphics or create their own, perform comprehensive analysis at country and regional levels, blog, and share their views and work with others, thereby creating an informed community of users.

As part of its continuing efforts to strengthen statistical systems and promote open access to statistics across the entire continent, the AfDB plans to extend this Open Data platform to all African countries, to create a truly regional data collection, dissemination, and knowledge-sharing system.

Users can access the Open Data for Africa Platform at [opendataforafrica.org](http://opendataforafrica.org).
The African News Innovation Challenge will enable African news organisations to experiment in digital technologies and other newsroom innovations

It’s called the African News Innovation Challenge (Anic), and it has US$1-million to award in start-up grants. Anic, which was announced in October, and had its soft launch in early December, will formally launch in January. The premise of the African News Innovation Challenge is simple: it’s a fund that will enable African news organisations to experiment in the digital technologies and other newsroom innovations, at no financial risk to themselves. But it’s not about simply throwing money at problems; the projects that are chosen will also receive technical support and individual mentoring.

Anic’s project manager Justin Arenstein, who currently holds a Knight International Journalism Fellowship, is a passionate advocate of news innovation and, in particular, data journalism. Arenstein says one of the aims of Anic is about “realising the wealth of information that’s available (and) the use it could have in the newsroom.”

“A lot of African media... just regurgitates,” says Arensteins. “We seldom have the tools to go out and aggressively test what they’re saying.” Elaborating further, he says: “The problem is we (journalists) don’t have the programming and IT skills necessarily and IT geeks don’t have any concept of content, so they build fantastic tools, and they sink without a trace. The idea was how do we bring together these two very different constituencies?”

Answering his own question, Arenstein says that: “One of the ways that’s worked internationally is to dangle a very big carrot in front of them.” And so the concept of the African News Innovation Challenge was born. Initially the Omidyar Network put up US$500,000 for the project, and this was soon matched. “It actually only took us two- and-a-half months to raise a million dollars,” says Arenstein. “There is money available for innovation and experimentation.”

The challenge will work like this: in January, at the formal launch, Anic’s advisory council and judging panel will be announced. Arenstein says these two bodies already include people from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the International Centre for Journalists, and Google. In February, a call for entries will go out. “We envision a two- to three-month window period, during which people will post their idea on a public forum, and we’ll casually invite the rest of the industry to help refine that idea,” says Arenstein. “This is not really an initiative for people who want to build top-secret (projects). Ideas are cheap; it’s actually execution that builds successful products and successful projects.

Winners will be announced in the third quarter of 2012, and then the hard work really begins. Commenting on the innovation the project intends to foster in African media, Arenstein says: “You almost need a crisis where there’s real pain in a marketplace, for people to go out and invent something to solve it.”

With the backing of the African Media Initiative, the Omidyar Network, the International Centre for Journalists, Google, the Knight Foundation, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the US Department of State, and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers – all of whom are contributing either funding or expertise – the African News Innovation Challenge has already garnered high-level support. Now it’s up to the journalists and media workers of Africa to meet the challenge. We look forward to seeing what they come up with.


See here http://www.world-economics-journal.com/Contents/ArticleOverview.aspx?ID=494 for a recent journal article on ‘Measuring the Wealth and Progress of African Economies’. According to the abstract: “What do the statistics from the international databases tell us about income and growth in Sub-Saharan Africa? Less than we would like to think. The article takes a starting point in per capita GDP estimates in Africa. Recently, Ghana announced a revision of its GDP statistics, increasing its national income estimates by over 60%. This article shows that similar revisions are to be expected in other countries. Many statistical offices are currently using out-dated data and methods. It is argued that with the current uneven application of methods and poor availability of data, any ranking of African economies according to GDP levels is misleading. It is argued that the World Bank, prominent among data disseminators, is currently not providing the necessary information to complement its datasets, and that this shortcoming misleads data users.”
The benefits of mobile phones to farmers and agriculture

Vodaphone teamed up with Accenture and Oxfam to try and take a more systematic look at the benefits of mobile phones to farmers in order ‘to stimulate the necessary engagement between mobile operators, governments, NGOs and businesses to realise these opportunities and explore others.’ The result is a new report (pdf) ‘Connected Agriculture: The role of mobile in driving efficiency and sustainability in the food and agriculture value chain’. Below are some highlights:

“The study concentrates on 12 opportunities for mobile technology, in four key areas highlighted by stakeholders:
1. improving access to financial services,
2. provision of agricultural information,
3. improving data visibility for supply chain efficiency and
4. enhancing access to markets.

Each of the 12 opportunities was modelled across 26 countries in Africa, India, Australasia, Europe and the Middle East. The 12 specific opportunities explored in this study could increase agricultural income by around US$138 billion across 26 of Vodafone’s markets in 2020.

They could also cut carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 5 mega tonnes (Mt) in these markets and reduce freshwater withdrawals for agricultural irrigation by 6%, with significant savings in water-stressed regions. These benefits assume there will be around 549 million mobile connections to relevant services in 2020. The greatest potential for improving farmers’ income comes from access to financial payments and agricultural information via mobile, together delivering approximately 75% of the total increase in agricultural income from the opportunities studied.”

Oxfam’s Duncan Green who blogged about the report is not entirely convinced by the big numbers reckoning that the US$51bn from improved access to financial services would come from an additional 240 million connections – ”that’s over US$200 per mobile per year, which seems an awful lot for a typical small farmer (and the report claims to focus on smallholders)”.

However, Oxfam’s Barbara Stocking welcomes the focus on mobile financial services, on moving this discussion away from corporate philanthropy and into discussions of core business models and applying these to smallholders, and urges the phone companies and others to go further in three areas:

- How mobile technology could improve the efficiency of government safety net systems that assist the poorest and most food insecure small farmers – rather than looking only at the role that mobile technology can play in increasing farmer productivity and income from agriculture
- How companies such as Vodafone can better understand, document and address barriers to the use of mobile technology affecting women. Getting new technology owned and used by women often carries significant challenges, for example overcoming illiteracy and cultural norms which mean that men tend to be the early owners and beneficiaries of new technologies
- How mobile technology could drive new agricultural practices rather than simply greater efficiency in current practices, particularly around climate change adaptation, and ensuring focus is given to a full range of opportunities around climate change adaptation.