



Innovation as a Tool for Poverty and Inequality Reduction

“Innovate” /'Inəveɪt/ *verb*

*Make changes in something established,
especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products.*

The Brief

- 2/3 of the global population will be urban by 2050
- This means new infrastructure & innovation needed to drive economic growth and sustainable development will be from an urban perspective – not forgetting rural development in food production
- We're already seeing whole new industries and associated technology for energy, transport, water, sanitation, health, agriculture & housing
- New strategies and organisations being built for changing social needs
- And ICT must be accessible to bridge the digital divide
- I would add – “New Thinking” – we're living in a whole new world

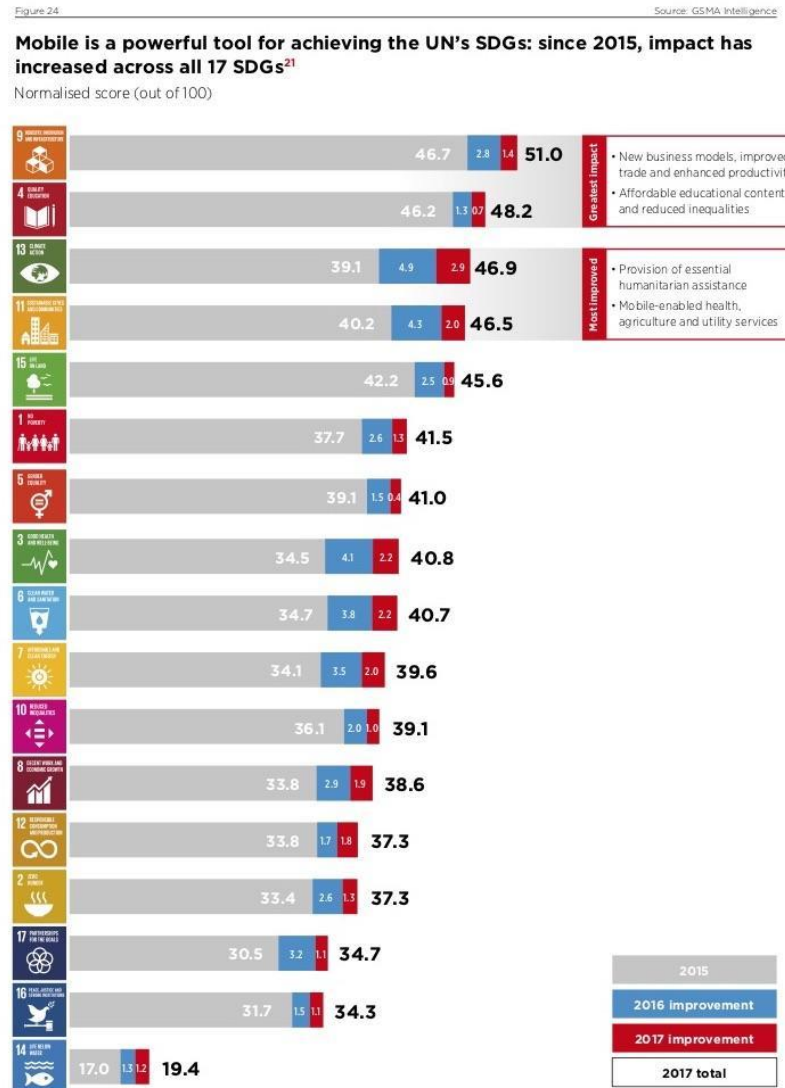
Why am I here?

- I'm in the business of bridging the digital divide
- 23 years in digital content and connectivity
- 17 of those connecting the unconnected in Africa
- Been at the forefront of rural connectivity – GSM (mobile) extension
- Now driving data connectivity – free open access to the Internet
- Africa holds the answer to the eradication of poverty and inequality
- That answer is in Africa's youth and their access to knowledge
- Innovative “access to knowledge” is how we make it work

What kind of innovation do we need?

- Innovation is defined as “changing something established”
- Tangible change - changing technology, transport & products
- Intangible change – changing how we think
- We need both and we need them now

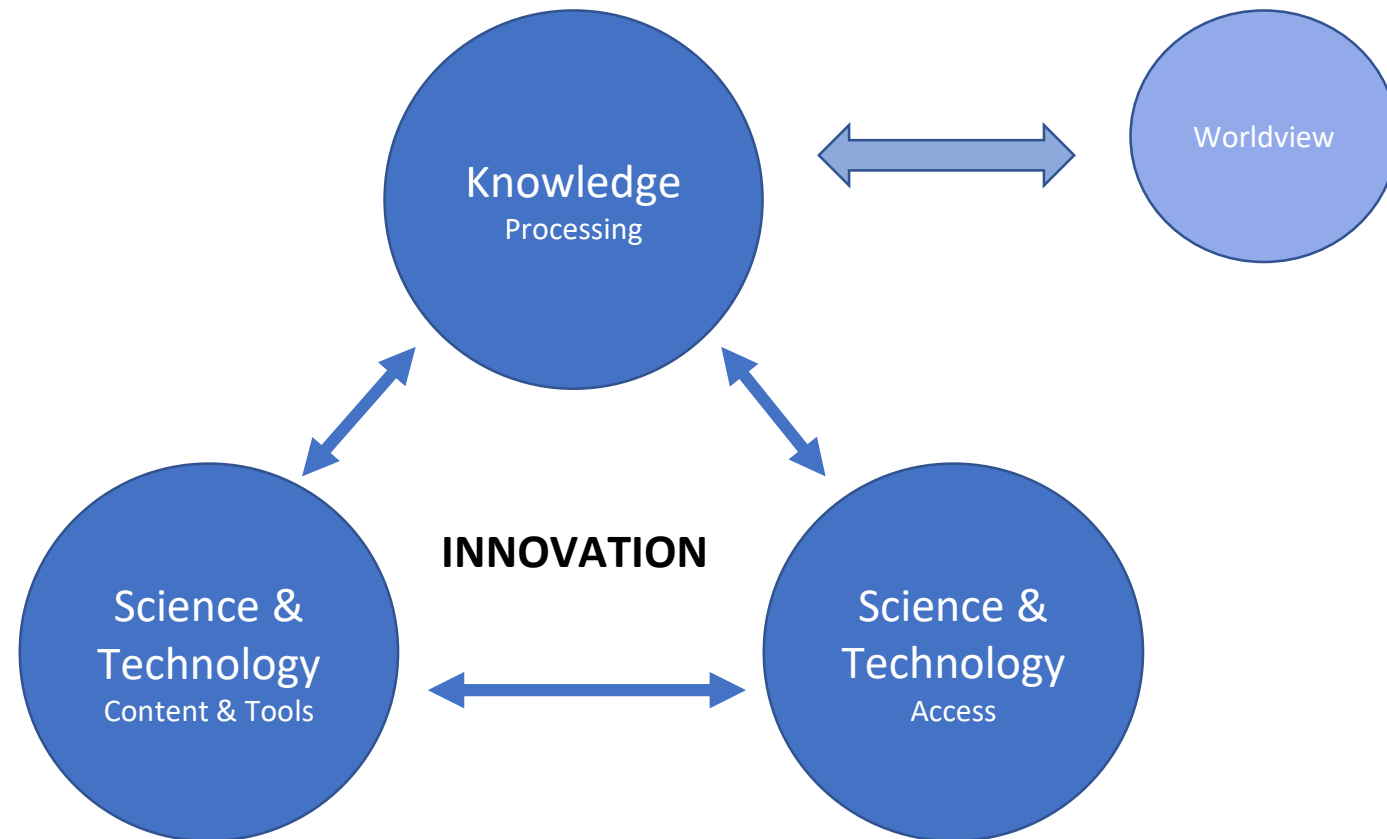
SDG 1: Progress best ever - but it is slowing



How is Innovative thought going to help?

- It means new thinking on how to use science and technology innovation already available to us - the tools and content that we in this room use every day - your data connection, YouTube, games, Ted talks, your recorded lectures, that chess competition...
- Combine innovative thought with easy affordable (free) access to innovative content and together they will bring **prosperity**, the most powerful weapon against poverty and inequality

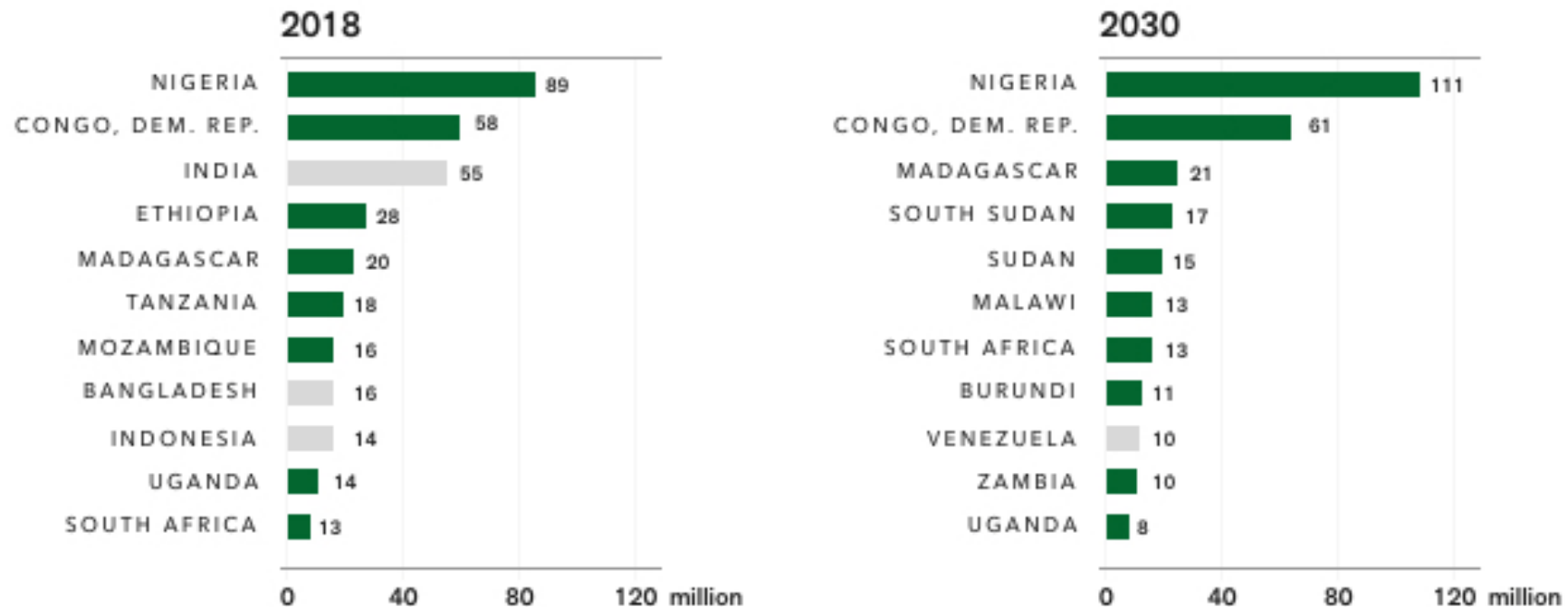
How do we reduce poverty and inequality?



Why is innovation in Africa the answer?

- Because Africa has the biggest youngest population on earth
- A global asset or a global liability
- While overall poverty reduction is already an unprecedented success: 2019 started with the lowest prevalence of extreme poverty ever recorded in human history — at less than 8 percent
- Not in Africa – where it's getting worse - Africa has become ground zero:
- By the end of 2018 in Africa as a whole, there were about 3.2 million *more* people living in extreme poverty
- Africa will have 90% of global poverty by 2030 - most of those will be under 25
- We need to fix this!

Global Poverty Ranking: African countries will represent 9 out of the top 10 by 2030

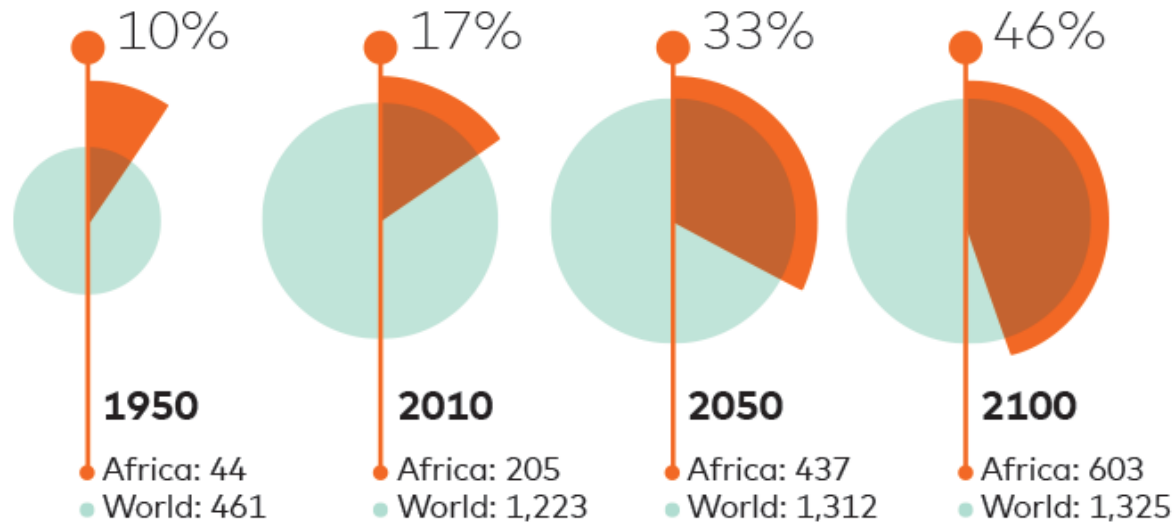


Note: Rankings end 2018 and projections for end 2030; Source: World Data Lab projections (base case)

Africa's Youth - Asset or Liability?

By 2100, almost half of the world's youth will be African

SHARE OF THE WORLD'S YOUTH (%) 1950-2100



YOUTH POPULATION (MILLIONS)

Source: Africa Ahead: The Next 50 Years, 2013 Ibrahim Forum Facts & Figures

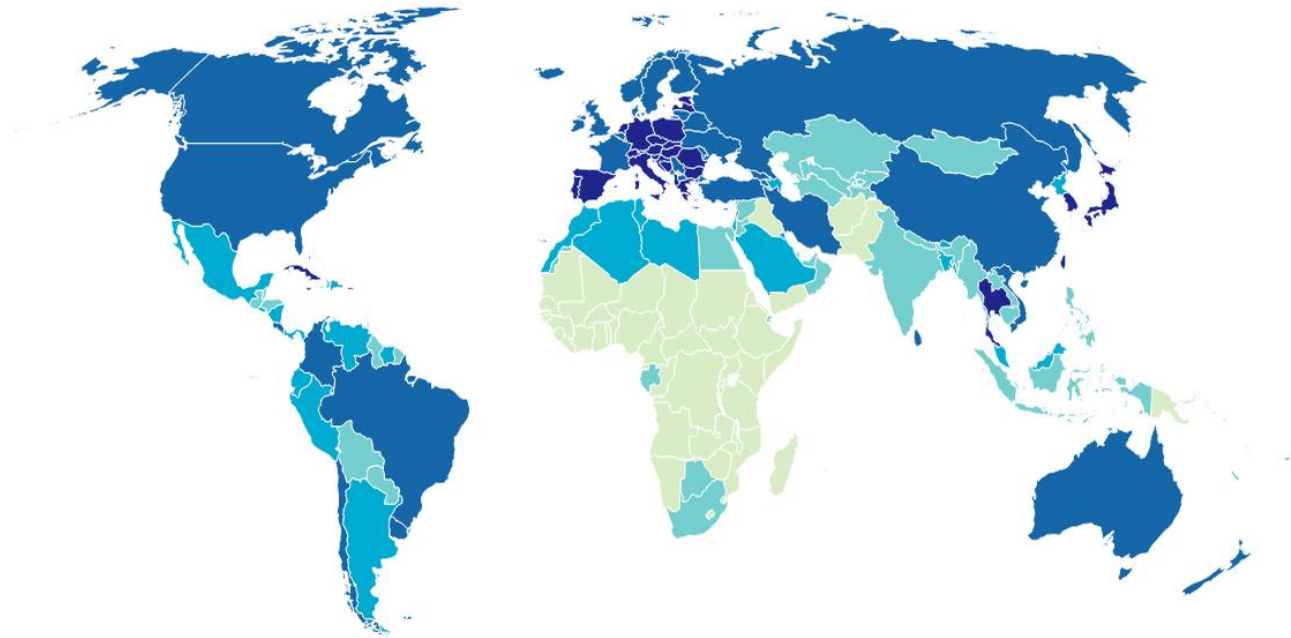
Youth population refers to the population aged between 15 and 24.

Source: UNDESA, 2012

The Old World

PERCENT OF POPULATION AGES 65 AND OLDER, (2050)

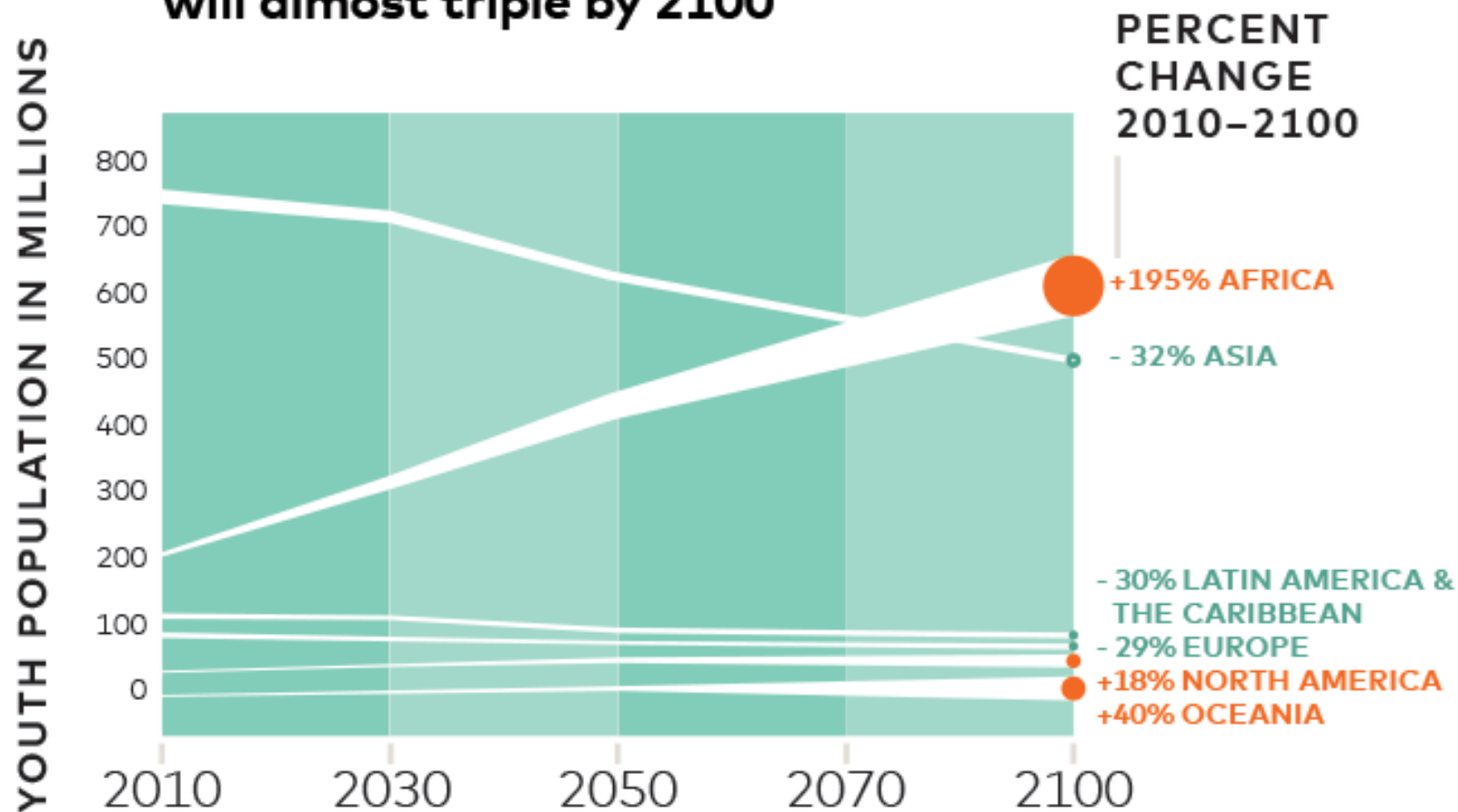
3% - 8% 9% - 14% 15% - 20% 21% - 27% 28% - 36%



SOURCES

*2018 World Population Data Sheet *

Africa is the only continent where the youth population will almost triple by 2100



Source: Africa Ahead: The Next 50 Years,
2013 Ibrahim Forum Facts & Figures

Fix Africa and you fix the World

- Africa offers the biggest opportunity/reward in the poverty battle – the growth centre of the World by 2050
- It has a record of innovation - home of some of the most innovative technology initiatives: mobile money, pre-paid SIMs, micro finance, micro insurance, and of course Nollywood
- It has the biggest youngest population on Earth - young, ambitious, enterprising & talented
- A youth population like any other that is capable of teaching themselves - given the right tools
- The old guard of “big men” holding the Continent back today will be gone in 10 years - not a long time
- New leaders are emerging - in Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Namibia
- African solutions are replicable elsewhere - they translate well into the rest of the world
- The tools to make all this possible are available – knowledge content and learning technology already exists
- The incentive is there - as the rest of the world ages - it's in their interest to invest in Africa

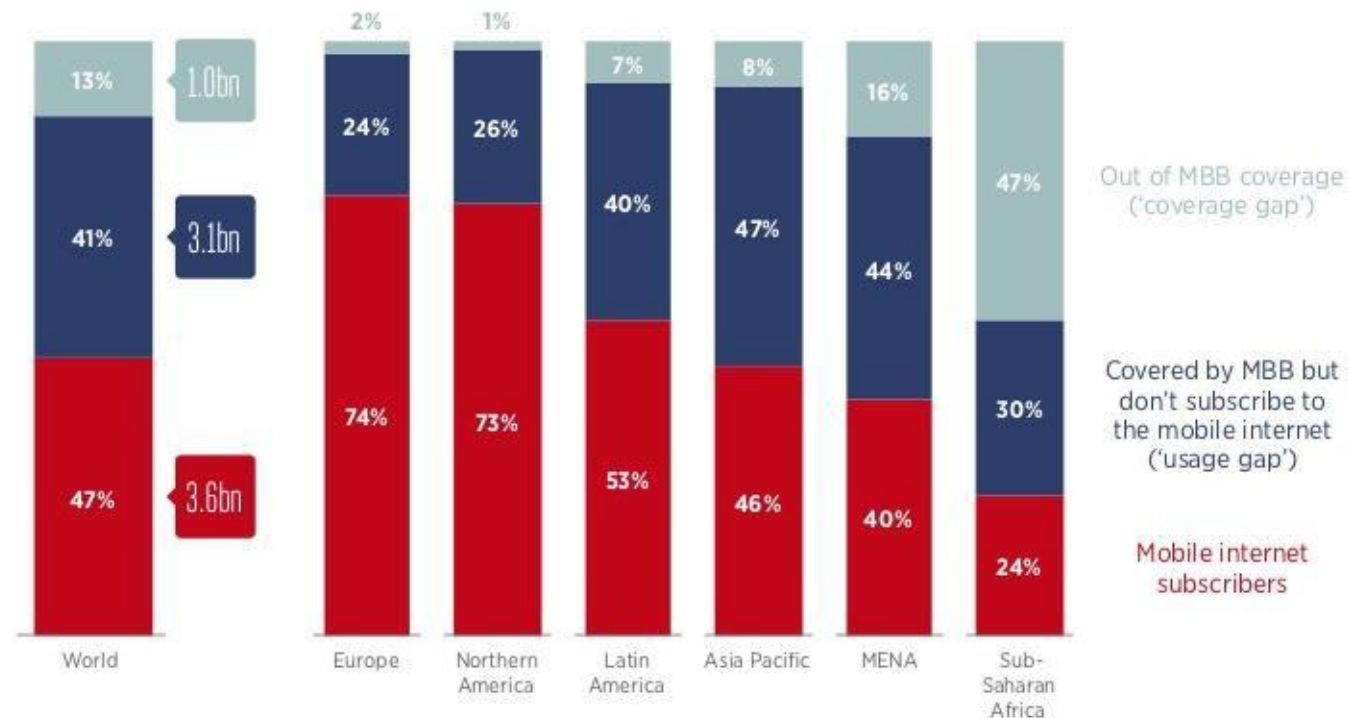
So what's stopping us? 1 Billion unconnected

Figure 20

Source: GSMA Intelligence

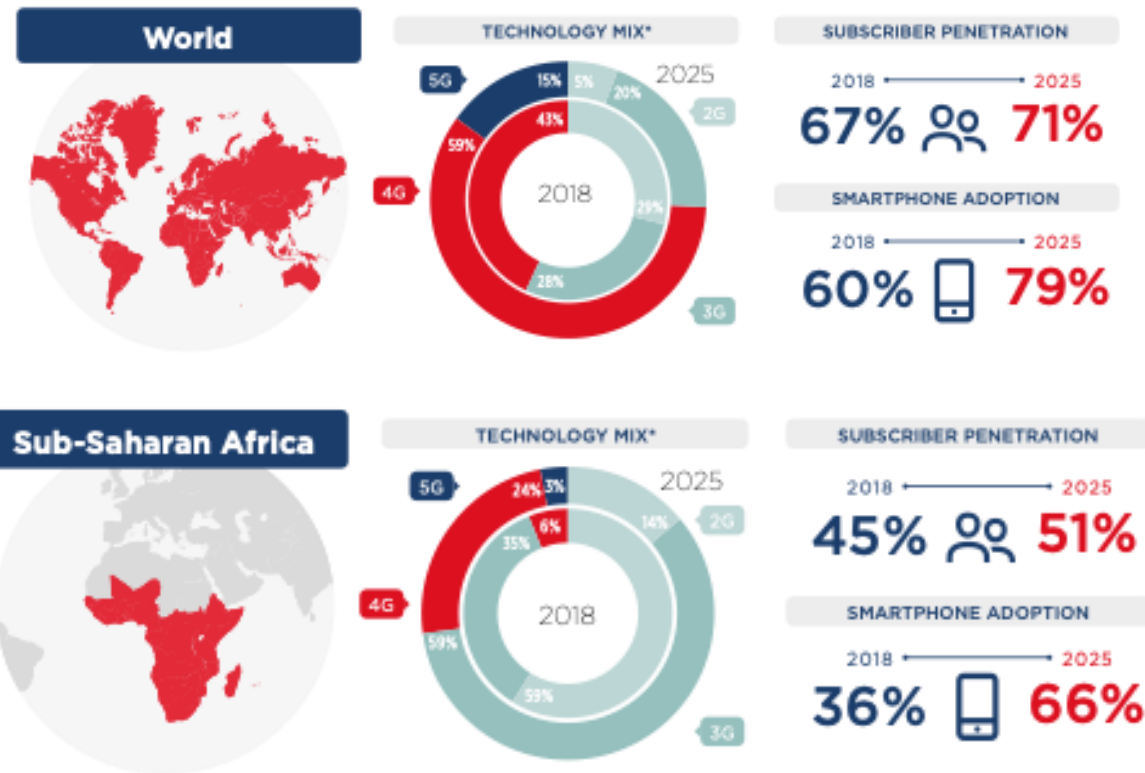
More than 4 billion people don't use the mobile internet

Percentage of population, 2018



Not enough critical devices

 The Mobile Economy 2019



What do we have to fix?

- Africans “access” to the knowledge base - They don’t have it and they can’t get it
- Data and learning must be free
- The knowledge base itself
- Everyone must have a smartphones
- Assist traditional education to adapt to students following a parallel tutored self learning curriculum
- Change the world’s perception of African youth
- Refocus development and public sector funding along with private sector funding

Where do we start?

- With innovative thinking - rethink knowledge - the access to knowledge and processing that knowledge - in parallel with existing education systems
- Provide a curated knowledge base of content and tools that will enable young Africans to teach themselves - and start young - 3 to 8 years are the most critical
- Enable the safe navigation of this ocean of information - connectivity
- Provide the mentoring/tutoring to help these youngsters process that information so they can make informed decisions - AI, avatars, Zoom
- This is where academia will make the difference - teach young Africa how to think – not what to think
- Then convince the rest of the world to pay for it

A challenge to Academia

- Formal education in Africa will not innovate fast enough to cater for the half a Billion youth there will be in Africa in 2050
- This means the only option is self learning - we have to make it work
- Make it work and we solve the poverty conundrum too
- Let's go prove to the world that kids can teach themselves
- Because they are going to do that anyway

If anyone's interested - next steps...

- A call to action for you all in this room - you are the connection to the brightest minds in the world - you have the skills, the connections and the influence to make this real
- We prove the concept together
- There are any number of projects across underserved Africa
- We establish a working group (academia & implementers) to develop the concept
- We pitch the funders
- We implement
- We start now - because we're already out of time...
- Today's three year olds are the parents of those half billion youth in 2050
- They will be the ones paying our \$400 trillion pension savings shortfall in 2050

Our Future





CONNECT EARTH

INTERNET . BETTER

THANK YOU

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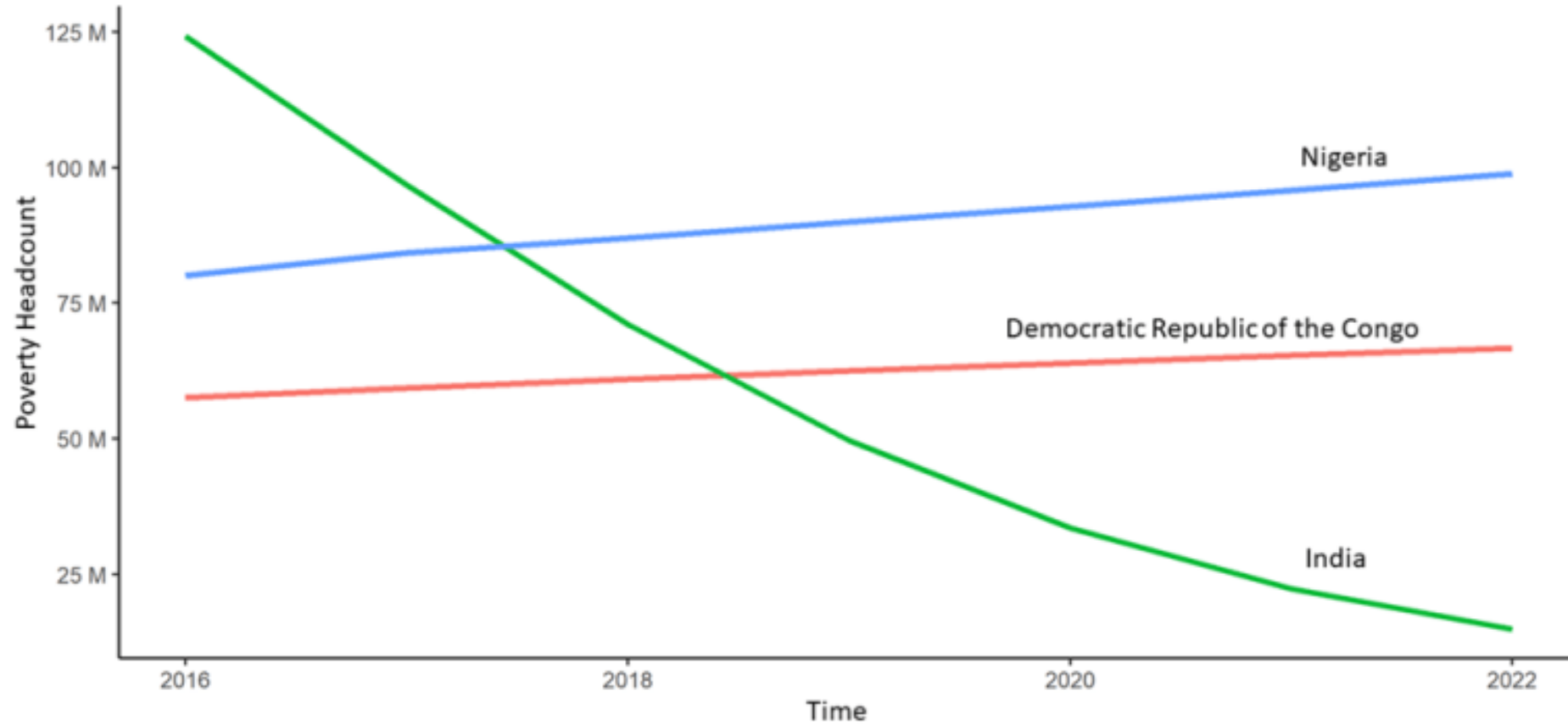
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India is moving down in global poverty rankings



Source: Authors' estimates based on PovCal (World Bank), World Economic Outlook (IMF); World Population Prospects (UN); Shared Socio-Economic Pathways (IIASA), World Income Inequality Database (UNU-WIDER); Algorithm developed by World Data Lab