

MENTAL HEALTH & WORKPLACE WELLNESS WEBINAR

Bridging Inter-Generational Mind- Gap for the Future of Work: An African Perspective

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Outcome Report

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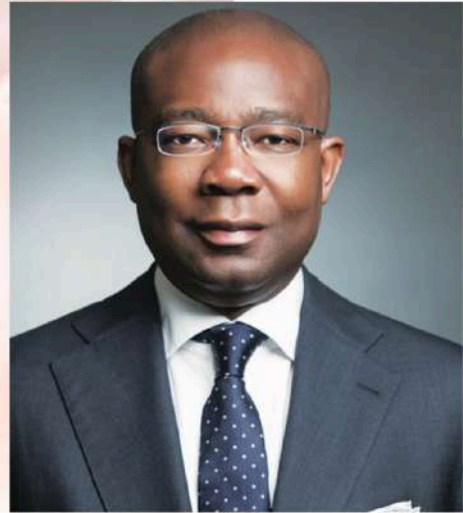


Mr. Aliko Dangote CON

Aliko Dangote is the founder and president/chief executive of the Dangote Group, the largest conglomerate in West Africa. The Group currently has a presence in 17 African countries and is a market leader in cement on the continent. One of the Group's subsidiaries, Dangote Cement Plc, is the largest listed company in West Africa and the first Nigerian company to join the Forbes Global 2000 Companies list.

The Group has diversified into other sectors of the Nigerian economy including agriculture and is currently constructing the largest petroleum refinery, petrochemical plant and fertilizer complex in Africa.

Internationally, Dangote sits on the board of the Corporate Council on Africa and is a member of the Steering Committee of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative, the Clinton Global Initiative, the McKinsey Advisory Council, and the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum.



Mr. Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede FCIB, CON

Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede is the Founder and Chairman of Africa Initiative for Governance (AIG), a not-for-profit organisation, established to be a catalyst for high public sector performance in Africa by bringing proven private sector innovation, leadership and funding to the public sector in a private-public partnership to attract, inspire and support future leaders of Africa's public sector.

Mr. Aig-Imoukhuede is also the Founder and Chairman of Coronation Capital Limited, an Africa-focused private equity and proprietary investment firm established in 2014. Prior to this, he was Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Access Bank Plc, where he led the transformation of the bank to rank amongst Africa's leading banks. Commander of the Order of the Niger "CON", conferred by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for his contributions to the development of banking and finance, and Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (West Africa).

CALL TO ACTION



Zouera Youssoufou

Director, ABCHealth

MD/CEO, Aliko Dangote Foundation

The growing intergenerational diversity within professional environments calls for a deliberate and strategic approach to bridging the existing mind-gaps that hinder productivity, innovation, and overall employee well-being. The necessity of a holistic framework that accommodates the unique psychological, emotional, and professional needs of each generation cannot be overstated, as it is instrumental in fostering a sustainable and thriving future of work on the continent.

The significance of mental health in workplace environments extends far beyond personal well-being; it directly influences organizational performance, employee engagement, and economic productivity. The demands of modern work, coupled with socio-economic pressures, require innovative wellness strategies that prioritize resilience, emotional intelligence, and intergenerational collaboration. Organizations that fail to recognize the impact of mental health on workforce sustainability risk increased attrition, reduced efficiency, and a diminished competitive edge.

The African private sector plays a critical role in reshaping the narrative around workplace mental health by integrating policies and practices that foster inclusivity, psychological safety, and employee empowerment. Mental health is no longer a personal issue but a corporate responsibility that demands leadership commitment, structural adjustments, and policy-driven interventions. Employers must adopt a proactive stance in creating workplace cultures that accommodate diverse generational perspectives, as each cohort, whether Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, or Generation Z; brings distinct experiences, communication styles, and expectations. Without a well-structured approach to bridging these gaps, organizations will continue to struggle with workplace tensions, decreased collaboration, and diminished productivity.

The theme of the webinar, 'Bridging Inter-Generational Mind-Gap for the Future of Work: An African Perspective,' amplifies the necessity of fostering an ecosystem that embraces mental health as a fundamental step of sustainable workforce development. The traditional workplace model, which often prioritizes rigid hierarchies and standardized operational approaches, is no longer sufficient in addressing the evolving needs of a multi-generational workforce. The private sector must lead by example in fostering adaptive work environments that acknowledge the unique strengths of different generations while mitigating conflicts and misunderstandings that arise from varied perspectives. Organizations must move beyond superficial wellness programs and instead implement data-driven policies that address stress management, burnout prevention,

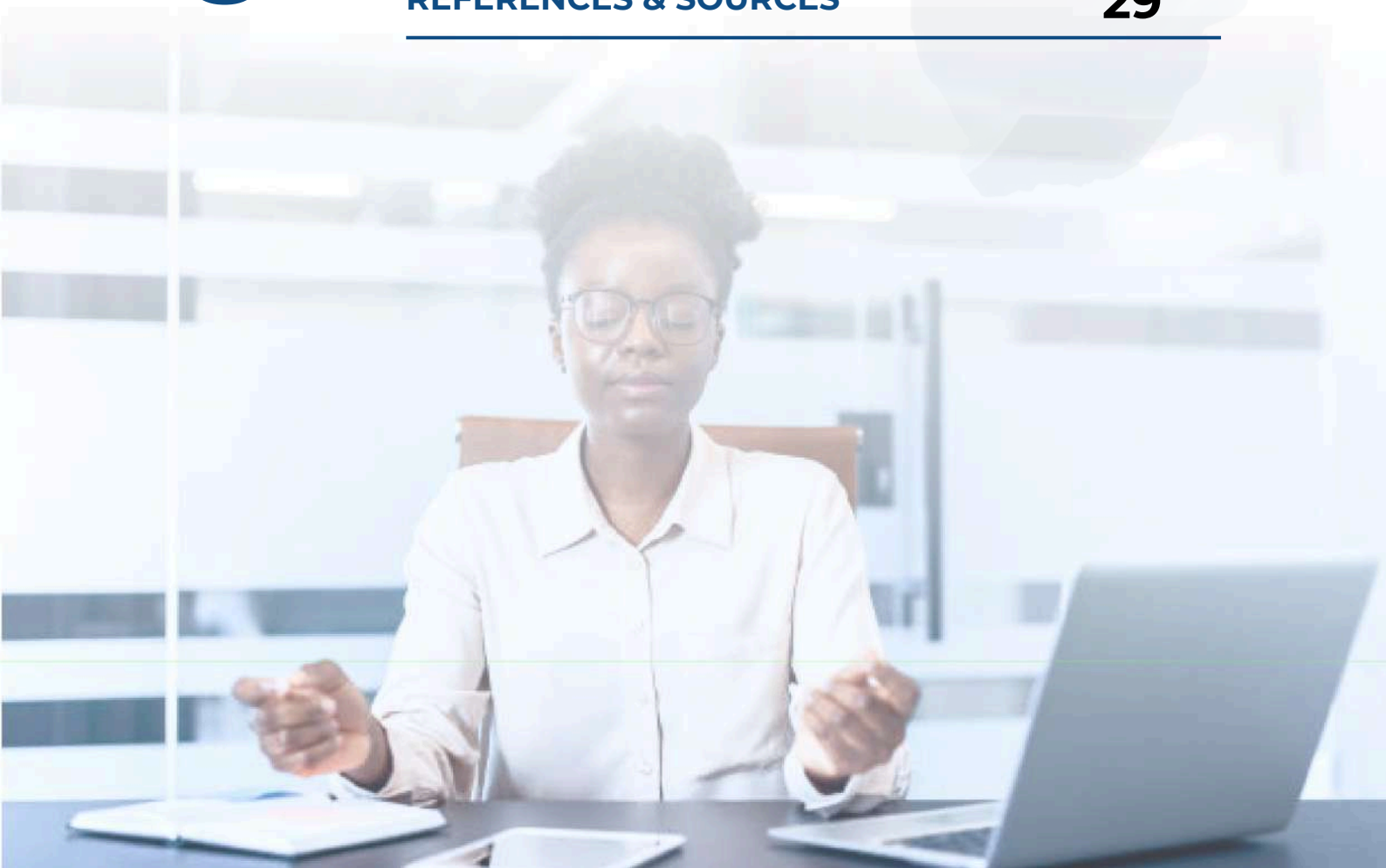
and psychological safety in a culturally relevant manner.

This is a clarion call for business leaders, policymakers, HR professionals, and all workplace stakeholders to recognize that mental health is a business imperative. It is not a topic to be relegated to annual wellness campaigns or token employee assistance programs; rather, it must be embedded into the DNA of corporate strategy. Companies that invest in comprehensive mental health initiatives not only improve employee satisfaction and retention but also drive long-term profitability and innovation. Workplaces must prioritize continuous education on mental health literacy, ensuring that managers and employees alike are equipped with the knowledge and tools to foster psychologically safe workspaces. Through mentorship programs, cross-generational dialogue, and tailored employee support systems, businesses can transform their workforce dynamics and create environments where individuals of all ages thrive.

The time for action is now. The private sector must take decisive steps in mainstreaming mental health and wellness as integral components of workplace culture and strategy. Companies must collaborate with policymakers, health organizations, and mental health professionals to drive systemic change that ensures African workplaces are supportive and adaptive to the needs of an evolving workforce. This is an opportunity for businesses to be at the frontline of a transformative movement that prioritizes human capital, bridges intergenerational divides, and fosters a work environment where employees can perform at their highest potential.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	05
INTRODUCTION	06
SPEAKERS HIGHLIGHTS	11
PARTICIPANT'S SPOTLIGHT	21
RECOMMENDATIONS	25
CONCLUSION	26
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	27
CONTRIBUTORS	28
REFERENCES & SOURCES	29



In January 2025, the African Business Coalition for Health (ABCHealth) convened a high-level webinar on ‘Bridging Inter-Generational Mind-Gap for the Future of Work: An African Perspective’, an important conversation at the intersection of mental health, workplace wellness, and Africa’s evolving workforce dynamics. This dialogue emerged as a response to the pressing need to align multi-generational workplace expectations with sustainable economic growth, recognizing that the future of work in Africa hinges on inclusivity, adaptability, and well-being.

The workplace in Africa is undergoing rapid transformation, with four distinct generations actively shaping organizational structures, leadership styles, and corporate culture. Each generation brings unique perspectives, ranging from the institutional knowledge and traditional work ethics of Baby Boomers to the digital fluency and entrepreneurial mindset of Generation Z. However, while this diversity presents opportunities for innovation, it also introduces challenges in communication, collaboration, and mental health integration. The ability of organizations to harness the strengths of a multi-generational workforce while ensuring psychological safety and workplace wellness will determine Africa’s competitiveness in the global economy.

The discussions at the webinar focused on critical aspects of workforce sustainability, particularly the role of mental health in professional environments. Across Africa, the stigma surrounding mental health has long prevented open conversations about workplace stress, anxiety, and burnout. Employees, particularly younger generations, are advocating for work-life balance, psychological safety, and corporate cultures that prioritize well-being. Simultaneously, organizations are recognizing that mental health is not just a social issue but an economic one, directly influencing productivity, retention, and innovation.

This webinar served as a platform for thought leaders, corporate executives, policymakers, and mental health advocates to explore how Africa can integrate mental wellness into workplace policies, ensuring that businesses foster environments that support employees’ holistic well-being. The discussions aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), SDG 3 (Good Health & Well-Being), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), highlighting the need for inclusive workforce policies that accommodate diverse generational needs.

Following its commitment to shaping Africa’s health and economic narrative, ABCHealth has played an instrumental role in facilitating dialogues that bridge the gaps between public and private sector stakeholders. From its launch in 2019 at the Africa Business Summit: Health Forum, held on the sidelines of the 32nd Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), to the release of the Healthcare and Economic Growth in Africa Report, ABCHealth has consistently advanced policies and partnerships aimed at improving the continent’s health systems.



Mories Atoki (Dr.)
Chief Executive Officer
ABCHealth

The insights from this report reiterate the urgency of embedding mental health frameworks within corporate structures, implementing workforce policies that foster intergenerational collaboration, and redefining productivity to include employee well-being. By leveraging global best practices, Africa can create workplace models that balance economic growth with mental wellness, ensuring that both younger and older professionals thrive in evolving work environments.

This report serves as both a roadmap and a call to action. Governments, businesses, non-profits, and professional communities must recognize that mental health and workplace wellness are fundamental to Africa’s workforce resilience. As we navigate the future of work, the focus must shift toward policies that bridge generational gaps, eliminate workplace mental health stigma, and create psychologically safe workspaces that empower employees to perform at their best. The key takeaway from the webinar was clear: the future of work in Africa requires a fundamental shift in how organizations approach mental health and workforce dynamics. Leaders must champion mental health as a strategic imperative, recognizing that a workforce that feels heard, valued, and supported is more likely to drive innovation.

ABCHealth remains committed to fostering strategic collaborations that drive impactful change. Through continued engagement, policy advocacy, and innovative workforce solutions, we will work towards an Africa where mental health is not an afterthought but a central pillar of workplace success. This is the time for action, and together, we can build a future where Africa’s workforce is not only skilled and diverse but also healthy, resilient, and future-ready.

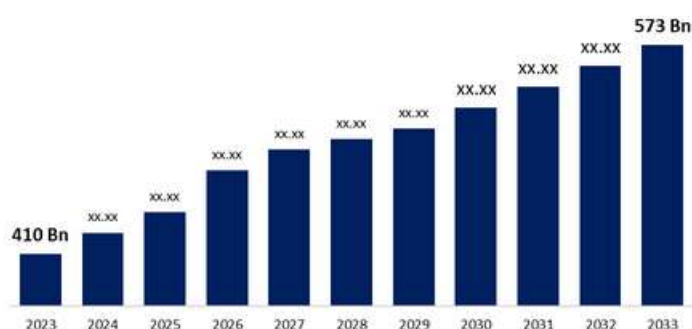
INTRODUCTION

In African workplaces, a significant generational divide influences mental health and workplace wellness. Younger employees are increasingly aware of their mental health needs and are actively seeking support. In contrast, older generations may have limited mental health literacy, leading to unrecognized and untreated conditions. This disparity can result in communication barriers and differing expectations, affecting workplace dynamics. Additionally, Generation X employees, who often hold leadership positions, face unique stressors such as balancing work with caregiving responsibilities, making them susceptible to anxiety-related disorders and sleep deprivation. Addressing these intergenerational differences is crucial for fostering a supportive and productive work environment.

An estimated 63% of health workers globally report experiencing workplace violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 23% of frontline healthcare workers suffered from depression and anxiety, while 39% struggled with insomnia. These statistics highlight the pressing need to prioritize workplace wellness, particularly in Africa, where mental health challenges are often overlooked or underreported.

Workplace health is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the physical, mental, and social well-being of employees. It involves creating safe, supportive, and healthy environments that enable employees to perform their duties efficiently while reducing risks to their health. Workplace health practices are integral to the sustainability of organizations and directly impact national development.

Global Mental Health Market



The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as:

"A state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community."

The WHO also defines workplace health (or occupational health) as:

"The promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental, and social well-being of workers in all occupations."

Workers' health, safety, and well-being are vital concerns for hundreds of millions of working people worldwide. However, this issue extends beyond individuals and their families, it is crucial for the productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of enterprises, as well as their ability to contribute to economic development at local, national, regional, and continental levels. In Africa, comprehensive data on work-related deaths and injuries is limited. However, where data is available, it reveals that the continent lags behind global best practices in workplace health. Africa accounts for 11.8% of global workplace-related deaths, second only to Asia, which accounts for 65%. The lack of robust workplace wellness policies, mental health interventions, and occupational safety regulations contributes to the high burden of work-related health challenges on the continent.

Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the importance of workplace wellness in Africa, particularly regarding mental health advocacy, employee assistance programs, and corporate well-being initiatives. Addressing workplace wellness holistically, by integrating mental health support, stress management programs, and employee well-being strategies, can significantly improve productivity, reduce workplace violence, and create healthier work environments.

The ABCHealth Webinar on Mental Health and Workplace Wellness, themed "Bridging Inter-Generational Mind-Gap for the Future of Work: An African Perspective", is a timely intervention that seeks to address the dynamic and evolving nature of Africa's workforce. With nearly 60% of its population under the age of 25, Africa is home to the youngest workforce globally, presenting both unparalleled opportunities and significant challenges for economic advancement. The future of work on the continent is shaped by generational differences, technological disruptions, shifting workplace expectations, and the need for holistic wellness strategies to support a thriving workforce. By creating a platform for dialogue, this webinar amplifies the necessity of fostering inter-generational collaboration, prioritizing mental health, and developing forward-thinking policies that will ensure sustainable growth and productivity across African industries.

Work and mental health are deeply interconnected. A supportive and healthy work environment fosters mental well-being, while good mental health enhances productivity and job satisfaction. Conversely, poor or unsafe working conditions, stressful work environments, strained workplace relationships, or unemployment, especially when prolonged, can significantly deteriorate mental health or worsen pre-existing conditions.

Without appropriate support systems in place, individuals experiencing mental health challenges may struggle with self-confidence, job performance, absenteeism, and overall work satisfaction. These challenges extend beyond the individual, affecting family members and caregivers as well.

Globally, approximately 62% of people aged 15 and older are engaged in economic activities, with nearly 60% of the world's population in employment as of 2022. However, around 15% of working-age adults live with a mental health condition at any given time. In 2019, an estimated 301 million people globally were living with anxiety, 280 million with depression, and 64 million with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, while 703,000 people lost their lives to suicide. Many of these individuals were of working age.

Depression and anxiety; two of the most prevalent mental health conditions, are estimated to cost the global economy \$1 trillion annually, primarily due to lost productivity. Those with severe mental health conditions, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, often face significant barriers to employment due to stigma and discrimination, despite the fact that meaningful participation in the workforce is essential for recovery. Addressing mental health in the workplace is not just a social responsibility but also an economic necessity, reinforcing the need for inclusive policies, supportive structures, and mental health-friendly work environments.

The Burden of Suicide in Africa

Africa has the highest suicide rate globally, surpassing other regions despite having the least resources allocated for mental health care. According to WHO's 2019 data, the suicide rate in Africa stood at 11.2 per 100,000 people, which is higher than the global average of 9.0 per 100,000 people. This statistic underscores the urgent need for intervention and targeted prevention strategies in African nations.

Key Suicide Statistics in Africa

- **Annual Suicide Deaths:** Over 77,000 people die by suicide in Africa each year. This means that every 40 seconds, a life is lost due to suicide on the continent.
- **Age-Adjusted Suicide Rate:** Africa's suicide rate of 11.2 per 100,000 is alarmingly high when compared to other WHO regions, such as the Eastern Mediterranean (6.4 per 100,000) and the Americas (9.0 per 100,000).
- **Gender Disparities:** Suicide disproportionately affects men in Africa, with suicide rates among men being higher than among women. This aligns with global trends where men are more likely to die by suicide, while women tend to attempt suicide more frequently.

- **Youth and Suicide:** Suicide is among the top three causes of death among young people aged 15–29 in Africa, reflecting the severe mental health challenges faced by young populations.
- **Underreporting and Data Limitations:** The actual suicide rates may be even higher due to underreporting and a lack of reliable data collection mechanisms in many African countries. Social stigma, religious beliefs, and weak healthcare reporting systems contribute to incomplete suicide statistics.

Mental Health in African Workplaces: The Hidden Battle Affecting Productivity and Lives

The workplace is a significant aspect of people's lives, occupying a substantial portion of their time and shaping their overall well-being. However, in many African countries, workplace environments are often characterized by extreme stress, economic uncertainty, job insecurity, and poor mental health support. These factors have made the workplace a critical area of concern in understanding the high suicide rates across the continent. The workplace is not just a setting where people earn their livelihoods; it is also a space where their emotional, psychological, and social well-being is constantly tested. The effects of chronic workplace stress and mental health neglect have far-reaching consequences, contributing to feelings of despair, worthlessness, and ultimately, suicidal ideation.

One of the primary issues affecting mental health in the African workplace is job insecurity. The continent is plagued by high unemployment rates, and for those who are employed, the fear of job loss is ever-present. Many people work in informal or contract-based employment with little to no job protection, creating an environment of constant anxiety. Insecure job conditions mean that workers are often subjected to unpredictable income streams, making it difficult to plan for the future or meet basic financial needs. This sense of instability fosters stress, leading to anxiety and depression, which, when left unchecked, can contribute to suicidal thoughts. Employees in unstable jobs frequently experience a loss of self-worth, particularly when they are unable to provide for their families. The African cultural emphasis on family responsibility places an additional burden on workers, who often struggle with shame and guilt if they are unable to fulfill these expectations.

Workplace bullying and harassment are also significant contributors to poor mental health and suicidal tendencies among employees. In many African workplaces, hierarchical structures allow for power imbalances that can lead to intimidation, discrimination, and unfair treatment of workers. Managers or supervisors who abuse their authority create toxic work environments that push employees into chronic stress and emotional turmoil.

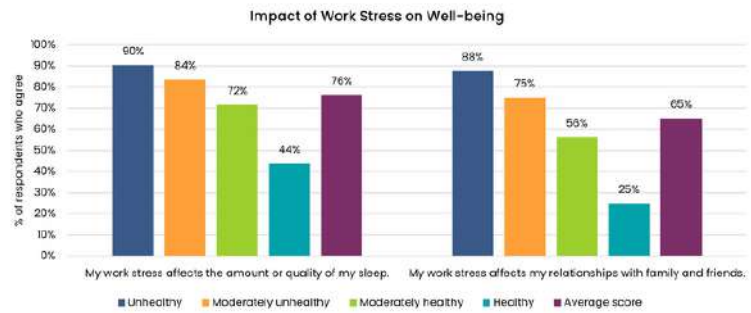
Workplace harassment, whether verbal, psychological, or physical, diminishes a person's self-esteem and leaves lasting emotional scars. Women, in particular, face unique workplace challenges, including gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, which contribute to feelings of helplessness and depression. Without adequate support systems or avenues for reporting these abuses, employees are left to suffer in silence, increasing their risk of suicide.

The expectation of long working hours with minimal breaks or time for self-care is another key contributor to workplace-induced mental health struggles. Many African workers, especially in low-income sectors, work excessively long hours under harsh conditions, often without the necessary legal protections to ensure their well-being. Burnout is a common issue, yet it remains unaddressed in many industries. The physical and emotional exhaustion that comes with overworking leads to heightened stress levels, decreased productivity, and a sense of being trapped in a cycle of endless labor. Without mechanisms to manage workplace stress, employees become more susceptible to depression and suicidal ideation. The lack of work-life balance, coupled with high expectations from employers, leaves little room for individuals to engage in personal fulfillment, social interactions, or mental health care.

Another critical factor affecting mental health in the African workplace is the stigma surrounding mental illness. Many organizations do not acknowledge mental health as a legitimate workplace concern, and employees who express distress or seek mental health support are often perceived as weak or incapable. This stigma discourages individuals from speaking openly about their struggles, fearing that they may be ridiculed, demoted, or even dismissed from their jobs. The absence of workplace mental health programs means that many employees suffer in silence, unable to access the resources and professional help that could prevent crises. In cultures where resilience and toughness are valued, admitting to mental health struggles is seen as a sign of failure. This leads to individuals bottling up their emotions, allowing them to fester until they become overwhelming and, in extreme cases, result in self-harm or suicide.

Poor compensation and financial distress also contribute to the rise of workplace-induced suicide rates. Many workers across Africa earn wages that barely cover their basic needs, leading to chronic financial stress. The inability to meet daily expenses, pay school fees, afford healthcare, or support dependents creates feelings of hopelessness. Financial burdens often push employees into cycles of debt, further exacerbating their stress levels. The psychological impact of debt is severe, as it leads to feelings of entrapment, shame, and loss of dignity. Many suicides are linked to financial hardship, as individuals who feel

they have no escape from debt see death as the only way out. The lack of employer support, coupled with economic instability, makes the situation even more dire for many workers.



Limited access to healthcare, including mental health services, further aggravates workplace-related suicide risks. Many African countries do not have mental health coverage as part of their healthcare plans, leaving employees without access to necessary psychological services. Even in workplaces that provide health insurance, mental health support is often excluded from coverage, making therapy and psychiatric care unaffordable. Employees experiencing severe stress, anxiety, or depression have nowhere to turn, leading them to rely on self-medication, alcohol, or drugs to cope. The use of substances as a coping mechanism only worsens mental health conditions, increasing the likelihood of impulsive suicide attempts. The absence of workplace wellness programs or employee assistance programs further isolates individuals, as they have no structured support system within their professional environment.

Toxic workplace cultures that prioritize performance over well-being also contribute to declining mental health. In many organizations, employees are expected to deliver results at all costs, often sacrificing their physical and emotional health in the process. The pressure to meet unrealistic targets, compete with colleagues, and constantly prove one's worth leads to chronic stress and exhaustion. The fear of failure becomes overwhelming, and in cases where employees feel that they are unable to meet expectations, they may experience severe distress. In extreme cases, individuals who perceive themselves as failures may contemplate suicide as a way to escape the relentless pressures of their work environment.

Remote work, although a modern convenience, has also contributed to mental health challenges, particularly in African countries where job security remains low. With the rise of digital jobs and work-from-home setups, employees often find themselves isolated, disconnected from social support networks, and unable to separate work from their personal lives. The blurring of work-life boundaries has led to increased stress, sleep disturbances, and feelings of loneliness. The lack of in-person interactions reduces the emotional support that traditional office environments provide, making employees more vulnerable to depression.

The role of leadership in addressing workplace mental health cannot be overlooked. In many African organizations, there is a lack of proactive leadership that prioritizes employee well-being. Mental health is rarely discussed in boardrooms, and policies that promote mental health support are often nonexistent. Leaders who fail to recognize the impact of mental health challenges on productivity and employee retention contribute to a culture of neglect. Without leadership-driven initiatives, workplace mental health remains a secondary concern, leaving employees to struggle in silence.

The African workplace must evolve to recognize mental health as a crucial factor in employee well-being and overall productivity. Suicide prevention strategies should be integrated into workplace policies, ensuring that employees have access to psychological support, fair working conditions, and financial wellness programs. Companies must create safe spaces where employees can openly discuss mental health without fear of discrimination. Employers should also invest in professional mental health services, providing employees with the necessary resources to manage stress, anxiety, and depression. Work environments must foster a sense of belonging, where employees feel valued, supported, and respected. Addressing workplace mental health is not only a moral obligation but also a crucial step in reducing suicide rates across Africa. Making mental well-being a priority improves organizations to create healthier, more productive workforces while contributing to the larger goal of suicide prevention on the continent.

Institutionalizing Mental and Workplace Health Best Practices in Africa

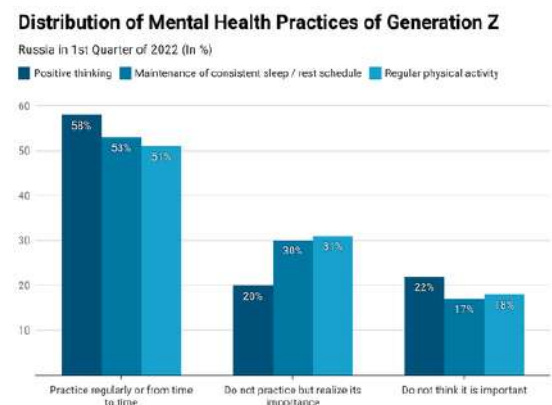
The importance of workplace health is a foregone conclusion; for businesses (and the wider economy) to benefit, workplace health best practices must be institutionalized across Africa. This involves creating a framework where businesses, organizations, and government entities work together to promote and sustain the physical, mental, and social well-being of employees.

This has become even more critical considering the continent's persistently rising mortality profile. Research shows that a leading cause of death among Africa's working population is ischemic heart disease, often expressed as hypertension (high blood pressure), which many medical experts attribute to the lifestyle of the average worker, termed occupational stress. Occupational stress, or job strain, resulting from a lack of balance between job demands and job control, is considered one of the frequent factors in the etiology of hypertension in modern society.

Institutionalizing workplace health best practices in Africa requires a multi-faceted approach involving government policy, corporate responsibility, employee education, and continuous improvement. With the right support and investment, African organizations can create healthier

workplaces, contributing to both individual well-being and national productivity growth. While workplace health encompasses both the physical and mental aspects, current trends indicate a shift in priorities, especially among employees.

In several surveys conducted among working Millennials (workers born between 1980 and 1995), the intrinsic traits in a company that mattered most to them were ranked (from most important to least important): a competitive pay package, career growth, job security, financially stable company, and welfare benefits.



For Generation Z (workers born between 1996 and 2012), who are now gradually percolating into organizations across Africa, mental health and well-being, as well as work-life balance, are key priorities over a competitive pay package, career growth, and job security. This new crop of workers is not just motivated by a paycheck; they want meaningful work that aligns with their values and offers opportunities to grow and develop. Unlike prior generations, Gen Z expects employers to be partners in creating a healthy work-life balance. Businesses and governments across Africa should accommodate these realities in their planning, ensuring that mental health and workplace wellness become integral components of organizational policies and practices.

The Inter-Generational Divide in African Workplace

There is a generational divide that exists within the modern workplace. Each generation, spanning Traditionalists, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, brings distinct values, expectations, and approaches to work. The interplay between these diverse perspectives has far-reaching implications for organizational efficiency, workplace culture, and career development trajectories. While younger generations are digital natives who thrive in agile, technology-driven environments, older generations often bring a wealth of institutional knowledge, experience, and leadership acumen. The challenge, however, lies in aligning these different viewpoints to create a cohesive and productive workforce that leverages the strengths of each demographic group.

The evolution of work in Africa has been further complicated by the rapid pace of technological change. Digital transformation, artificial intelligence, automation, and new modes of working, such as hybrid and remote models, have fundamentally altered traditional work structures. For younger professionals, technology is an integral part of their professional and personal lives, enabling seamless collaboration, increased efficiency, and innovation. Older professionals, on the other hand, may struggle with the speed of change, feeling overwhelmed by the demand for new digital skills and the shifting expectations of modern workplaces. This tension, if not properly managed, can lead to a breakdown in communication, resistance to change, and inefficiencies in operations.

Workplace wellness is a critical aspect of this discussion, particularly as the modern work environment places increasing demands on employees. Mental health challenges such as burnout, stress, anxiety, and depression are becoming more prevalent across all age groups, exacerbated by economic instability, job insecurity, and the pressure to adapt to new working conditions. Younger employees, while often more open about mental health struggles, may find it difficult to access structured support systems within organizations. Conversely, older employees, who may have worked in environments where mental health was rarely discussed, may struggle with acknowledging and addressing these challenges. The webinar seeks to unpack how organizations can create psychologically safe workspaces where employees across all generations feel supported, valued, and empowered to perform at their best.

Africa's broader economic and developmental trajectory is linked to how well it can harness the potential of its workforce. High youth unemployment rates, estimated at over 12% in sub-Saharan Africa, indicate that many young people remain excluded from the formal labor market. Meanwhile, many older employees are navigating late-career transitions in industries that are rapidly evolving. Without intentional efforts to bridge the generational mind-gap, Africa risks losing out on the immense benefits that come with a multi-generational workforce. Organizations that proactively create inclusive, flexible, and mentally supportive workplaces will not only attract and retain top talent but also position themselves as leaders in the global marketplace.

The cultural dimension of inter-generational workplace dynamics cannot be overlooked. African societies are deeply rooted in traditions that emphasize respect for elders, hierarchical structures, and established norms. However, globalization and exposure to diverse work cultures have influenced younger generations to challenge traditional practices, seeking workplaces that offer autonomy, inclusivity, and rapid career progression. This divergence can lead to workplace conflicts, where

younger employees feel stifled by rigid structures, and older employees feel that their expertise and authority are being undermined. The webinar aims to facilitate discussions on how organizations can balance these cultural expectations while fostering environments that encourage innovation, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Leadership and management play a significant role in bridging generational gaps and fostering workplace wellness. Organizations that embrace inclusive leadership models, where mentorship, coaching, and knowledge-sharing are prioritized, are more likely to experience higher levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and productivity. Senior leaders must recognize the value of inter-generational dialogue, leveraging the strengths of younger employees while providing the guidance and mentorship that ensures business continuity and sustained growth. At the same time, younger employees must be empowered to contribute their ideas, drive innovation, and take on leadership responsibilities that prepare them for the future of work.

As Africa navigates its place in the global economy, the ability to adapt to workforce trends will determine its competitiveness. The future of work is no longer defined by rigid career paths but by agility, continuous learning, and the capacity to integrate diverse perspectives. Bridging the inter-generational mind-gap is not just about resolving conflicts, it is about unlocking the collective intelligence and creative potential of Africa's workforce. This webinar presents a unique opportunity for policymakers, business leaders, wellness advocates, and organizational development professionals to engage in critical discussions that will shape the trajectory of Africa's labor market.

Through this platform, participants gained deeper insights into the complexities of inter-generational work dynamics, the importance of mental health in workforce sustainability, and actionable strategies for creating inclusive, future-ready organizations. The outcomes of these discussions will be instrumental in informing policies, workplace culture transformations, and leadership approaches that ensure Africa's workforce remains a powerful driver of innovation, economic resilience, and global competitiveness.

Bridging Inter-Generational Mind-Gap for the Future of Work: An African Perspective, is about reimagining workspaces that prioritize collaboration, wellness, and the holistic development of employees across all age groups. It is about developing a workforce that is adaptable, empowered, and equipped to drive Africa's transformation in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

SPEAKERS HIGHLIGHTS

Following the insightful exploration of inter-generational workplace dynamics and the impact of mental health on workforce productivity, this webinar featured a lineup of subject-matter experts. These thought leaders, drawn from diverse sectors, including policy, business, technology, and organizational development, brought a wealth of experience and insights that shaped discussions on building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready workforce in Africa.

Each speaker has played a pivotal role in addressing workforce transformation, inter-generational collaboration, and mental well-being in professional spaces. Their expertise guided the conversations on bridging generational divides, leveraging technology for workplace inclusivity, and promoting a culture of mentorship and mental wellness across all levels of an organization, including:

Guest Speaker (Welcome Address): Ms. Zouera Youssoufou – MD/CEO, Aliko Dangote Foundation, Director, ABCHealth, Nigeria

Guest Speaker (Closing Charge): Mr. Amaechi Okobi- Chief Brand and Communications Officer – Access Holdings, Nigeria

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Tunde MasseyFerguson Ojo – National Co-ordinator, National Mental Health Programme, Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, Nigeria

Host: Dr. Mories Atoki – Chief Executive Officer, ABCHealth, Nigeria

Co-Host/Moderator: Dr. Joshua Awesome- Founder, Africa Institute of the Mind (Coaching Psychologist & Mental Health Advocate) Nigeria.

Panelists:

Dr. Janis Davis – Street – Manager, Workforce and Community Health, Chevron, USA

Dr. Sara Touirsi – Psychiatrist & Psychotherapist, African Global Health (AGH) Morocco

Dr. Margaret Kagwe – Founder/Editorial Director, Esteem Psychology Magazine (Psychologist Mental Health Advocate, Esteem Mental Health Consultancy) Kenya.

To create resilient workplaces, mental health must be an integral part of organizational culture. Workplaces that prioritize psychological safety and emotional intelligence foster higher engagement, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. This fundamental perspective was highlighted by Dr. Joshua Awesome, co-host/moderator of the ABCHealth webinar, where the discussions reinforced the need for a balanced and inclusive approach to inter-generational workplace dynamics. It was emphasized that open dialogue, flexible work arrangements, and employee assistance programs contribute to breaking down the stigma surrounding mental health. In organizations where employees feel heard and valued, cross-generational collaboration thrives, enabling knowledge transfer, mentorship, and collective problem-solving.



Dr. Joshua Awesome – Founder, Africa Institute of the Mind

Workplace wellness extends beyond physical and mental health; it encompasses an organization's entire approach to employee engagement and professional fulfillment. Organizations that successfully bridge the generational divide implement policies that address diverse needs, from professional development opportunities for younger employees to job security and retirement planning for older professionals. Additionally, inclusive leadership models ensure that decision-making structures reflect the perspectives of all age groups. This holistic approach enhances team cohesion, reduces workplace conflicts, and fosters a sense of belonging for employees across different generations.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated workplace transformation, ushering in remote and hybrid work models that widened generational gaps. While younger employees adapted quickly to digital tools and flexible work arrangements, older employees often faced challenges related to digital literacy and adapting to new communication styles. The integration of AI and automation into business operations further highlights the importance of continuous learning, ensuring that no generation is left behind in the digital economy.

A thriving workforce is one where inter-generational diversity is viewed as an asset rather than an obstacle. Organizations that foster mentorship, collaboration, and inclusive leadership will be better positioned to navigate the complexities of the future of work. As Africa continues to assert itself on the global stage, its ability to bridge the inter-generational mind-gap will determine its competitiveness, innovation capacity, and long-term economic sustainability.

The host, Dr. Mories Atoki reinstated the Africa's broader developmental aspirations, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063, emphasize the importance of human capital development. Bridging inter-generational gaps and prioritizing mental wellness directly contribute to achieving SDG 8, which focuses on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 10, which advocates for reduced inequalities. Similarly, Agenda 2063 envisions an Africa driven by the potential of its people, particularly its youth and women. By supporting



Dr. Mories Atoki – CEO, ABCHealth

workplace cultures that integrate the perspectives of multiple generations, Africa can ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The discussion on the future of work is incomplete without addressing leadership's role in shaping inclusive and wellness-centered workplaces. Leaders must embrace dynamic and adaptable management approaches that foster collaboration between different age groups. The future of leadership will require a balance between experience-driven decision-making and data-driven, technology-enabled strategies. Effective leadership in Africa's workplaces must be characterized by inclusivity, agility, and a commitment to mentorship. Encouraging open dialogue, embracing innovation, and promoting work-life balance are all integral to building resilient organizations that thrive in the long term.

The future of work in Africa is a shared responsibility. It is not about any single generation leading the way but rather about collective progress, where knowledge, experience, innovation, and adaptability converge to create sustainable and thriving work environments. Organizations that recognize the value of inter-generational diversity and actively implement strategies to bridge gaps will be at the forefront of economic transformation. Similarly, workplaces that prioritize mental health and employee well-being will cultivate engaged, high-performing teams capable of driving Africa's workforce into a prosperous future.

A future where knowledge is seamlessly transferred across generations, where workplaces are dynamic and inclusive, and where mental well-being is not an afterthought but a fundamental pillar of success. By harnessing the collective power of Africa's workforce, the continent can redefine what it means to thrive in the 21st-century global economy.

The small- and medium-sized enterprises and startups have demonstrated a heightened awareness and a more progressive approach toward fostering environments that prioritize psychological well-being. Unlike traditional corporate structures that may still grapple with outdated perceptions of mental health in professional settings, these emerging businesses appear more adaptable and attuned to the needs of their workforce, particularly those comprising younger generations.

The demographic composition of startups, which are predominantly driven by Gen Zs; individuals who have grown up in an era of rapid technological advancement and digital connectivity. This generation brings with them an inherent understanding of the complexities of modern mental health challenges, shaped by their continuous exposure to vast amounts of information through digital platforms. While this access can serve as a resource for self-improvement and mental health literacy, it also presents significant risks. The overwhelming influx of information, coupled with the omnipresence of social media, contributes to heightened stress, unrealistic expectations, and the pervasive issue of digital fatigue.

For small and medium-sized companies, responding to these realities requires a more conscious effort to implement workplace policies that safeguard employees' mental well-being. Many of these businesses have recognized that fostering an open and supportive culture around mental health is not merely an ethical obligation but also a strategic imperative. Creating flexible work structures, encouraging open conversations about mental health, and providing resources for psychological support are increasingly becoming the norm in these settings. Their willingness to embrace new perspectives on workplace wellness reflects an understanding that a healthy workforce is inherently linked to productivity, creativity, and long-term organizational success.

However, the risks associated with the digital age continue to raise barriers for this generation in the workplace. The massive exposure to information; often unfiltered and sensationalized, has amplified stress levels, exacerbated feelings of inadequacy, and contributed to a growing sense of workplace anxiety. Social media, in particular, serves as a double-edged sword. While it fosters connectivity and professional networking, it also cultivates unrealistic career comparisons and a constant pressure to achieve rapid success. Many young professionals find themselves caught in an endless cycle of striving for external validation, which, when combined with the demands of a fast-paced work environment, can lead to burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Organizations that acknowledge these challenges are better positioned to create workplaces that not only attract top talent but also nurture resilience and well-being. The discourse around mental health in professional settings is a proof to the shifting priorities of modern businesses, particularly those that recognize the critical intersection between mental wellness, digital culture, and the future of work. By embracing these changes and implementing supportive measures, these companies are paving the way for a healthier, more sustainable approach to workplace well-being.

Welcome Address

Ms. Zouera Youssoufou, Managing Director of the Aliko Dangote Foundation, set the tone emphasizing the growing need for organizations to re-evaluate workplace structures and cultural dynamics to accommodate a workforce that spans multiple generations.



Zouera Youssoufou – MC/CEO, Aliko Dangote Foundation

The modern workplace is no longer defined by a single, homogeneous work culture. Instead, organizations now comprise professionals from varying generational backgrounds, each with distinct perspectives on career development, success, and personal fulfillment. This diversity, while valuable, has introduced complex challenges in workplace relationships, leadership styles, and operational effectiveness. In many cases, older generations tend to equate professional success with sacrifice, long hours, and unwavering resilience, whereas younger employees increasingly prioritize work-life balance, flexibility, and mental well-being. These contrasting outlooks have led to growing tensions in organizational structures, particularly in leadership transitions, performance expectations, and workplace communication.

One of the most profound insights from the session was the recognition that generational differences are not just about age but also about evolving values, technological advancements, and shifting societal norms. Younger employees, often digital natives, seamlessly integrate technology into their work, favoring efficiency-driven solutions, remote work options, and collaborative environments. Older professionals, while possessing extensive institutional knowledge and strategic expertise, may take a more traditional approach to work, emphasizing hierarchy, in-person interactions, and structured processes. These fundamental differences, if not managed effectively, can lead to workplace friction, miscommunication, and even disengagement. However, organizations that actively foster environments where inter-generational learning is encouraged, where senior professionals share their strategic insights while younger employees introduce new technologies and modern efficiencies, will find themselves positioned for greater productivity and innovation.

Beyond productivity and collaboration, the discussion highlighted the significant role of mental health in workplace wellness. The generational divide in

perceptions of mental health was particularly striking. While younger employees are vocal about the need for psychological safety, open conversations on mental well-being, and policies that prevent burnout, older professionals, having been conditioned in high-pressure work environments, often view resilience as the ability to withstand stress without external support. This traditional mindset, though deeply ingrained, is increasingly being challenged by emerging research and progressive workplace policies that recognize mental health as a fundamental component of employee performance and organizational success. The conversation explored how modern workplaces must transition from a culture of endurance to one of well-being. This means moving beyond outdated performance metrics that reward excessive work hours and instead designing systems that prioritize output, creativity, and holistic employee satisfaction. Mental health, as noted in the discussion, is not just an individual concern but a structural one, organizations must be deliberate in integrating mental wellness into their leadership frameworks, ensuring that employees at all levels have access to support systems, psychological safety, and a work environment that values well-being as much as productivity.

Contrary to common assumptions, digital fluency is not exclusive to younger professionals, nor does experience equate to resistance to change. Instead, organizations must cultivate continuous learning environments that encourage knowledge transfer in both directions, leveraging the strategic expertise of senior professionals while embracing the fresh perspectives and technological adaptability of younger employees. Companies that proactively integrate these strengths will enhance collaboration and efficiency across teams. The conversation dispelled the myth that digital adaptability is the exclusive domain of younger professionals. While younger employees may be more fluent in emerging technologies, older professionals bring a wealth of experience in navigating industry complexities and long-term strategic planning.

Forward-thinking organizations must bridge this gap not by reinforcing generational stereotypes but by fostering cultures of mutual respect, continuous learning, and reciprocal mentorship. Encouraging knowledge exchange between seasoned professionals and digital-first employees ensures that organizations can simultaneously preserve institutional memory while embracing the efficiencies of modern technology.

Leadership in the workplace is also evolving to reflect these changes. Traditional hierarchical structures, where seniority dictated influence and decision-making power, are being gradually replaced with more fluid leadership models that value collaboration, inclusivity, and adaptability. The session reinforced the idea that the future of work does not lie in rigid generational divides

but in the ability of organizations to create inclusive environments where diverse perspectives are leveraged to drive sustainable business growth. The older workforce has historically measured success through stability, longevity in an organization, and financial security. However, the younger workforce tends to prioritize meaningful work, purpose-driven careers, and environments that align with their personal values. Neither perspective is inherently right or wrong- rather, organizations must recognize that success is evolving, and workplaces must adapt accordingly to remain attractive to top talent.

There is a necessity for businesses to rethink workplace policies in a way that bridges these generational divides while prioritizing employee well-being. A key message from the webinar was that sustainable organizations are those that invest in inclusive policies, flexible work models, and mental health support systems that accommodate diverse professional needs. The conversation made it clear that organizations must no longer treat mental health as a secondary concern but as an integral part of their operational strategy. Companies that embrace these changes will not only enhance workplace harmony and productivity but also position themselves as leaders in the evolving global work landscape.

Keynote Presentation

Dr. Tunde Ojo provided a thought-provoking discourse on the intricate relationship between intergenerational dynamics, mental health, and workplace wellness, particularly within the context of Africa's evolving workforce. The presentation explored the necessity of bridging the intergenerational mind-gap as a fundamental step toward sustainable change management in professional environments which also amplified that without proactive strategies to address generational gaps, organizations may struggle with inefficiencies, workplace conflicts, and a disconnect between leadership expectations and employee engagement.



Dr. Tunde Ojo – National Co-ordinator, National Mental Health Programme, Federal Ministry of Health

The modern workplace is experiencing significant changes in attitudes, expectations, and operational frameworks, driven largely by the contrasting

perspectives of different generations. There is an increasing need to recognize how these shifts impact productivity, leadership transitions, and organizational culture. Change is inevitable, yet resistance to it often leads to friction between older and younger professionals. The dilemma of change management is not just about adopting new strategies or implementing updated policies; it is fundamentally about addressing the cognitive and emotional barriers that prevent seamless intergenerational collaboration. The mind-gap between older and younger employees extends beyond workplace practices into deeply ingrained beliefs about work ethics, professional success, and personal well-being. Traditional work environments were characterized by rigid structures, hierarchical leadership, and an emphasis on endurance, with mental health concerns often overlooked or dismissed as personal weaknesses. In contrast, younger employees, particularly those in Generation Z, advocate for flexibility, inclusivity, and mental well-being as integral components of workplace success.

The necessity of bridging the mind-gap becomes even more evident when considering the role of leadership in shaping workplace culture. Many leaders, particularly those who have navigated decades of professional experience, operate with a mindset shaped by resilience, long hours, and a results-driven approach. While these qualities have contributed to organizational success in the past, they often clash with the values of emerging professionals who prioritize balance, purpose, and mental well-being. This generational divergence creates an environment where younger employees feel disconnected from leadership expectations, and leaders, in turn, perceive the younger workforce as lacking the resilience and commitment required to thrive in competitive industries. The misunderstanding, if not addressed, exacerbates workplace stress, reduces productivity, and diminishes overall morale.

Conversations around intergenerational differences extend beyond corporate spaces into public service institutions, particularly the civil service, where structured hierarchies have long dictated professional growth. A significant gap exists in the civil service regarding leadership transitions, succession planning, and the preparedness of younger professionals to assume critical roles. The absence of structured mentorship, knowledge transfer, and adaptive workplace policies widens this gap, leading to inefficiencies in governance, service delivery, and institutional sustainability.

There is an urgent need for organizations, both in the private and public sectors, to implement frameworks that facilitate knowledge-sharing between experienced professionals and emerging leaders. Creating structured opportunities for intergenerational dialogue fosters an environment where wisdom meets innovation, and where professional expertise is preserved while embracing new methodologies that enhance efficiency and workplace satisfaction.

Mental health was extensively examined through the lens of intergenerational workplace relationships. The prevailing stigma surrounding mental health in professional environments is largely influenced by traditional perspectives that view emotional resilience as an indicator of professional competence. Many older professionals, having been conditioned in high-pressure work environments, equate success with the ability to endure stress, suppress emotions, and maintain a facade of unwavering strength. Younger professionals, on the other hand, challenge this narrative by advocating for psychological safety, emotional intelligence, and support systems that acknowledge mental well-being as a key driver of productivity and innovation. The clash between these perspectives often results in silent struggles, where employees across different generations experience burnout, anxiety, and workplace dissatisfaction but lack the institutional support to navigate these challenges.

Organizational cultures that fail to integrate mental health awareness into their leadership frameworks risk fostering environments where stress, disengagement, and high turnover rates become the norm. The conversation emphasized the importance of redefining workplace success beyond traditional metrics of performance and endurance. Success in the modern workplace should not be measured solely by the number of hours worked but by the quality of output, job satisfaction, and the ability to sustain a healthy work-life balance. Companies that recognize mental health as a strategic priority stand to benefit from increased employee retention, enhanced creativity, and a work environment that attracts top-tier talent across generations.

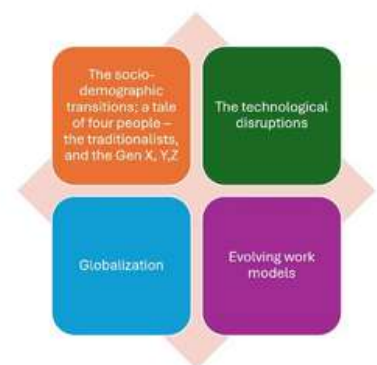
The broader implications of intergenerational workplace challenges extend into the realm of global workforce trends. The intergenerational mind-gap is not exclusive to Africa; it is a global phenomenon shaped by socio-economic factors, technological advancements, and evolving labor market demands. However, the African perspective introduces unique dimensions, particularly in the interplay between cultural expectations, economic realities, and institutional structures. Many young professionals in Africa operate in environments where traditional workplace norms are deeply embedded, creating an additional layer of complexity in the pursuit of progressive workplace reforms. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that balances respect for traditional professional values with the integration of modern workplace practices that prioritize mental health and employee well-being.

The changes shaping today's workforce go beyond generational mindsets. The rise of technology has significantly altered the way we work, breaking traditional barriers and redefining job roles. The reliance on digital solutions, automation, and artificial intelligence has

made work more efficient, but it has also created a learning curve for those who built their careers in an era where manual processes were the norm. The rapid pace of transformation leaves many older employees feeling left behind, while younger employees, who are at ease with technology, sometimes lack the patience to integrate their predecessors into the evolving digital landscape.

The workplace is also shifting in response to globalization and new work models. Remote work, freelancing, and the gig economy have blurred the lines of traditional employment, making the concept of a 9-5 job increasingly obsolete. Younger employees are less inclined to commit to one employer for decades; instead, they prioritize experiences, skill diversification, and opportunities that align with their personal values. For organizations that were built on long-term employee retention, this shift presents a challenge in maintaining loyalty and institutional knowledge.

What
changes
are we
seeing?



The challenge, then, is not about deciding which generation should take the lead. It is about fostering a culture where different perspectives coexist and complement each other. Older employees must be open to learning new skills, adapting to technological advancements, and recognizing that the definition of success is evolving. Younger employees, in turn, must appreciate the wisdom that comes with experience, respect the foundational structures that have shaped industries, and understand that not all traditions are barriers to progress. The solution lies in a workplace culture that encourages mutual respect, knowledge-sharing, and a willingness to evolve.

A redefined approach to workplace policies is necessary to support a thriving intergenerational workforce. Organizations must move beyond traditional, one-size-fits-all workplace policies and adopt flexible work models that cater to diverse professional needs. Remote work, mental health days, mentorship programs, and customized career development pathways are some of the strategies that can help organizations create environments that appeal to professionals across generations. Workplaces that embrace adaptability, inclusivity, and mental health consciousness will not only enhance employee performance but also position themselves as leaders in the rapidly evolving world of work.

African work culture has always been rooted in a strong sense of community. Unlike the hyper-individualistic approaches seen elsewhere, African workplaces have historically thrived on mentorship, collaboration, and shared responsibility. This cultural strength presents an opportunity to redefine workplace dynamics. By fostering intergenerational mentorship, where older employees pass down industry knowledge while younger employees introduce new tools and approaches, organizations can create an environment that values both tradition and innovation. Leadership styles must also evolve to reflect this shift, embracing emotional intelligence, adaptability, and inclusivity as key traits.

The ability to harmonize generational strengths, foster environments of mutual understanding, and create workspaces that champion both professional excellence and mental wellness will define the success of businesses and institutions in the coming years. Forward-thinking organizations that proactively address these dynamics will emerge as the frontrunners in building resilient, innovative, and people-centric workplaces that thrive in an era of continuous transformation.

Panel Session Key Highlights

This engaging discussion brought together distinguished experts who provided insights on leadership, mindfulness, cross-sector collaboration, digital innovation, and the role of media in shaping mental health awareness. One of the key areas of discussion focused on leadership models and practices that could effectively manage intergenerational differences. With organizations increasingly prioritizing sustainability, the conversation explored how investments in workforce health, particularly mental health and intergenerational wellness, could drive long-term organizational resilience and community impact.

The role of mindfulness in workplace wellness also takes center stage. With cultural values playing a significant role in shaping behavior, mindfulness techniques can be adapted to address intergenerational conflicts, ensuring a more cohesive and productive work environment. Additionally, global mental health policy trends were analyzed, offering evidence-based recommendations for organizations seeking to close intergenerational mind-gaps and promote workplace harmony.

With mental health challenges requiring a multi-sectoral approach, the conversation explored the critical partnerships between healthcare providers, governments, and businesses in fostering a supportive ecosystem for workplace wellness. Given the rapid advancements in technology, there were also insights on how digital tools and tele-psychiatry could be leveraged to create accessible, scalable, and culturally relevant wellness programs.

Addressing the issue of mental health literacy in workplaces, the segment examined the role of education, advocacy, and media in improving awareness and encouraging employees across generations to seek support. Storytelling and media platforms can also reshape mental health narratives, break stigma, and foster intergenerational understanding in professional settings.

Dr. Janis Davis Street, Manager of Workforce and Community Health at Chevron, USA, delivered a deliberation on the impact that generational diversity has on workplace dynamics, stating the necessity for organizations to adopt an inclusive and forward-thinking approach to workforce management. In today's corporate world, companies are no longer composed of a singular generational demographic but rather a broad spectrum of individuals at different life and career stages, each navigating distinct personal and professional realities.



Dr. Janis Davis – Street – Manager, Workforce and Community Health, Chevron

Employees today are part of an increasingly diverse ecosystem, where multiple generations coexist within the same professional space. Older employees, many of whom are now in leadership positions, find themselves balancing demanding careers with personal responsibilities such as caregiving for aging parents. At the same time, younger employees, who are digital natives and have grown up in an era of rapid technological advancements, approach work with an entirely different mindset, one that prioritizes work-life balance, flexibility, and mental well-being. This contrast in perspectives, expectations, and values can sometimes lead to friction, misunderstandings, and even disengagement if not properly addressed. As the workforce continues to evolve, organizations must recognize the complexities that arise from these inter-generational interactions and implement targeted interventions that create harmony and understanding across different age groups.

A key aspect of the discussion revolved around mental health and how it is becoming a core component of workplace wellness programs. Mental health is no longer an isolated or peripheral issue but a central determinant of an individual's ability to perform effectively in the

workplace. The growing recognition of mental health as both a non-communicable disease and a contributing factor to broader health issues underscores the urgent need for organizations to integrate mental well-being into their corporate strategies. There is a wealth of data that illustrates how mental health disorders have become one of the leading causes of disability and economic loss worldwide.

Employees who struggle with unaddressed mental health issues are more likely to experience reduced productivity, absenteeism, and difficulty in managing workplace relationships, which ultimately impacts overall business performance. The financial implications of mental health challenges are significant, as organizations bear the costs associated with decreased efficiency, increased healthcare expenses, and higher turnover rates. More than ever, businesses must view mental health not just as a personal issue but as a fundamental workplace concern that requires proactive and sustained intervention.



While technology has undoubtedly transformed the way work is conducted, making processes more efficient and increasing accessibility to information, it has also introduced new stressors that impact mental well-being. The expectation to always be connected, the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, and the pressure to continuously adapt to new digital tools have created an environment where many employees struggle to disconnect. The traditional concept of a clear division between work hours and personal time has been eroded, particularly with the rise of remote and hybrid work models. Many employees find themselves responding to emails late at night, attending virtual meetings across multiple time zones, and feeling an unspoken pressure to be available at all times. This phenomenon has led to an increased risk of burnout, stress, and workplace fatigue, particularly among those who have not established clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives.

Employees from older generations, who built their careers in a time when long hours were considered a hallmark of dedication, often struggle to embrace the idea of stepping away from work. Many have internalized the belief that professional success requires relentless commitment, making it difficult to disengage,

even when faced with exhaustion. In contrast, younger employees, who have been exposed to increasing conversations around mental health and work-life integration, are more vocal about the need to establish firm boundaries. A particularly relevant anecdote illustrated how this generational shift plays out in real life, an executive shared that her children, who belong to the millennial and Gen Z generations, often challenge her work habits by reminding her that her job does not "own" her and that she needs to learn when to disconnect. This generational divergence in perspectives presents both a challenge and an opportunity for organizations to redefine what a healthy work culture looks like.

To effectively address these challenges, organizations must embrace an inclusive approach that accommodates the diverse needs of their workforce while fostering a culture of mental wellness. A one-size-fits-all solution is no longer viable, given the complexities of managing a workforce that spans multiple generations. Instead, companies must implement tailored strategies that consider the unique experiences, values, and mental health needs of their employees. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through the creation of employee resource groups (ERGs) and structured workplace networks.

These platforms provide employees with safe spaces to discuss their challenges, access support systems, and build communities that enhance their sense of belonging. Women's networks, mentorship programs, and wellness committees are just a few examples of how organizations can create an infrastructure that supports employees across all demographics. By fostering open dialogue and encouraging cross-generational interactions, companies can bridge existing gaps and create a more inclusive and cohesive work environment.

Beyond structural initiatives, organizations must also invest in proactive measures that focus on the prevention and early detection of mental health issues. Rather than adopting a reactive approach that only addresses mental health crises after they arise, companies should integrate wellness programs that equip employees with the tools and resources needed to maintain their mental well-being. This includes implementing regular mental health training, offering access to professional counseling services, and designing workplace policies that prioritize well-being. Leaders and managers must also be trained to recognize the early signs of mental distress among their teams, ensuring that employees receive the support they need before their challenges escalate. The role of leadership in shaping workplace culture cannot be overstated, when leaders actively champion mental health initiatives, it sends a powerful message that employee well-being is not just a corporate talking point

but a genuine organizational priority. The discourse further emphasized that the future of work demands a shift in how organizations approach mental health and intergenerational workforce dynamics. Businesses that fail to adapt to these evolving realities risk losing talent, experiencing reduced innovation, and creating work environments that stifle growth and engagement. On the other hand, companies that proactively address these challenges position themselves as employers of choice, attracting and retaining top talent while fostering a culture of inclusivity, balance, and well-being. The traditional metrics of success, which once revolved solely around financial performance and productivity, must now be expanded to include employee wellness as a key determinant of long-term sustainability.

Dr. Janis Davis Street also highlighted Chevron's Stages Network, an employee resource group dedicated to addressing cross-generational workplace dynamics. The Stages Network was created to intentionally foster conversations around the unique challenges and opportunities that arise when multiple generations work together. This initiative serves as a platform for employees across different age groups to engage in open dialogue, share experiences, and gain insights into how generational perspectives shape workplace interactions. Through mentorship programs, intergenerational workshops, and knowledge-sharing sessions, the network helps bridge the understanding gap between younger and older employees. It also plays a vital role in promoting workplace policies that reflect the diverse needs of Chevron's workforce, ensuring that employees at every stage of their careers feel supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Dr. Margaret Kagwe, Founder and Editorial Director of Esteem Psychology Magazine, provided insights into the role of mental health in the workplace, emphasizing the necessity of fostering intergenerational understanding to create a mentally healthy and productive workforce. It is essential to address mental wellness through targeted interventions that cater to employees across all age groups, recognizing that generational differences often shape perceptions, attitudes, and approaches to mental health.

One of the critical aspects highlighted was the role of publications, particularly magazines, in shaping mental health discourse within professional environments. Unlike newspapers, which provide broad and often transient news, magazines serve as specialized platforms that cater to specific populations, offering in-depth analysis, research-based solutions, and expert perspectives on mental wellness. By focusing on relevant and curated content, magazines become essential tools in bridging knowledge gaps, normalizing conversations, and fostering inclusive workplace cultures where employees



Dr. Margaret Kagwe - Founder/Editorial Director, Esteem Psychology Magazine

A key theme is the necessity of creating environments that encourage individuals to share their experiences with mental health challenges openly. Workplace stigma remains a significant barrier to effective mental health management, as many employees fear being judged or perceived as weak if they disclose their struggles. This reluctance often leads to isolation, decreased productivity, and even burnout. The ability to provide safe spaces where employees can engage in meaningful discussions, seek help, and access the necessary support systems is integral to building a resilient workforce. Such initiatives require not only policy shifts but also a cultural transformation in which mental wellness is viewed as a fundamental component of organizational success.

The mental health needs of employees differ significantly based on generational experiences, socialization, and work expectations. While younger employees may struggle with imposter syndrome, anxiety over career progression, or the pressures of modern workplace dynamics, older employees may face challenges related to career transitions, technological advancements, and age-related stressors. Employers must recognize these diverse needs and develop strategies that cater to the psychological well-being of each demographic, ensuring that workplace wellness programs are not one-size-fits-all but rather tailored to address the nuanced challenges faced by different generations.

Age-sensitive publications are particularly crucial in advancing mental health literacy within organizations. When publications tailor content to address generational concerns, they facilitate a more inclusive dialogue on workplace wellness. Employees are more likely to engage with materials that resonate with their lived experiences, making it easier for them to acknowledge struggles and seek appropriate support. One of the major challenges in workplace mental health is the stigma surrounding mental illness. Many employees, regardless of age, hesitate to seek help because they do not want to be perceived as incapable or unfit for their roles. This reluctance is often exacerbated by the fear of professional repercussions, such as reduced career opportunities or workplace discrimination. However, when organizations invest in

age-sensitive resources that openly discuss mental health, they create an environment where employees feel empowered to seek assistance without fear of judgment.

The ability of magazines to normalize mental health conversations cannot be overstated. Through the power of storytelling, testimonials, and human interest narratives, publications help break down misconceptions about mental illness, offering real-life examples of individuals who have navigated mental health challenges and emerged stronger. These stories provide hope and encouragement, showing that mental health struggles are not career-ending but rather aspects of human experience that can be managed with the right support. Employees who read about others' journeys toward mental wellness are more likely to reflect on their own mental health, recognize when they need help, and take proactive steps toward self-care and recovery.

Entertainment and media also have a significant role in promoting workplace wellness. When entertainment is crafted with sensitivity and purpose, it becomes a powerful tool for improving mental health outcomes. Digital and print media that incorporate well-researched psychological insights, interactive engagement, and mental wellness advocacy contribute to a culture in which discussions around mental health are no longer seen as taboo. By integrating mental wellness content into entertainment formats, organizations can reach a broader audience and encourage more open dialogue around workplace mental health.

The transformation of workplace mental health requires a comprehensive approach that includes education, open conversations, targeted mental health initiatives, and the strategic use of media to foster awareness. Organizations must move beyond reactive responses to mental health issues and instead adopt proactive strategies that prioritize psychological safety, continuous learning, and intergenerational inclusivity. By embracing these principles, workplaces can create environments where employees across all age groups feel valued, supported, and empowered to take charge of their mental well-being.

Dr. Sara Tourisi, a psychotherapist and public health activist affiliated with African Global Health and specialized in cognitive behavioral therapy, emphasized the intricate connection between mental health challenges in Africa and broader socio-economic factors. Stigmatization has long plagued this branch of medicine and psychology, limiting its integration into workplace policies and public health initiatives.

The deeply ingrained reluctance to acknowledge mental health as a priority has contributed to its relegation to

paper-based commitments rather than being treated as a core aspect of organizational and governmental concerns. While mental health has been officially recognized in strategic discussions, it has not risen to the level of primary corporate interests.



Dr. Sara Tourisi – Psychiatrist , African Global Health

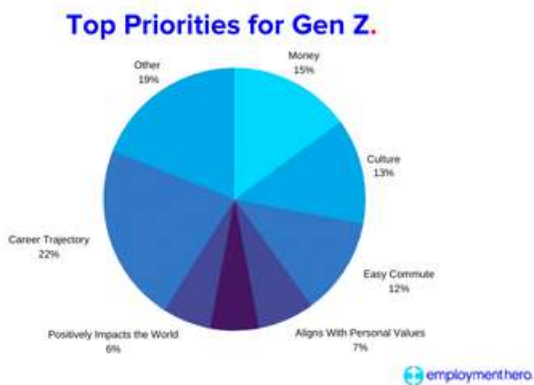
The workplace remains a critical setting where mental health issues manifest, impacting productivity, absenteeism, and overall employee well-being. The economic ramifications of untreated mental health conditions are staggering, with depression and anxiety disorders alone estimated to cost the global economy trillions of dollars annually. Workplace-related stress is an escalating concern, particularly in African economies where job insecurity, high expectations, and limited access to mental health support contribute to worsening psychological distress. Studies conducted in Morocco reveal that over 40% of employees report experiencing work-related stress, a condition that not only undermines individual productivity but also results in significant financial losses for companies due to absenteeism and decreased efficiency. The underlying factors contributing to these issues extend beyond professional pressures, encompassing personal struggles, family conflicts, and relationship challenges, all of which further compound workplace mental health difficulties.

The evolution of workplace wellness programs has seen some promising developments, particularly through public-private partnerships aimed at addressing mental health concerns within corporate environments. In Morocco, initiatives involving collaborations between the Ministry of Health, the banking sector, and private enterprises have sought to integrate wellness programs into organizational structures. These interventions, which have engaged approximately 20,000 employees over the past year, have yielded tangible benefits, including a significant reduction in absenteeism by 30%. By fostering a culture that prioritizes employee well-being, companies have been able to enhance workforce stability, reduce burnout, and improve overall job satisfaction.

National strategies aimed at addressing mental health within corporate spaces have also gained traction. Morocco's National Mental Health Strategy, launched in 2021, exemplifies a proactive approach toward embedding mental health considerations into the

workplace. Key industry players, including Total Energies and Vivo Energies, have actively participated in these efforts, recognizing the integral role of employee well-being in driving corporate success. The emphasis on mental health within these organizations reflects a broader shift towards acknowledging the economic and social imperative of fostering mentally resilient workforces.

Generational shifts have further influenced workplace dynamics, with younger employees, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, demonstrating a heightened awareness of mental health issues compared to previous generations. The evolving expectations of the modern workforce necessitate a redefinition of workplace wellness strategies to accommodate the needs of a generation that values mental health support as a fundamental aspect of employment. Startups, often spearheaded by younger entrepreneurs, have emerged as champions of mental health advocacy, embedding wellness initiatives into their corporate cultures from inception.



Telepsychiatry and digital mental health platforms represent an emerging frontier in bridging the accessibility gap for individuals who may lack direct access to traditional psychiatric services. The psychiatrist-to-population ratio remains alarmingly disproportionate, with only one psychiatrist available for every 100,000 people in many African regions, particularly in rural areas where mental health services are virtually nonexistent. Digital solutions, such as virtual therapy sessions and online mental health assessments, offer a viable alternative for individuals who either cannot access in-person services or lack the confidence to seek help due to stigma.

The development of digital platforms like Mental Health Connect, which provides virtual therapy and telepsychiatry services, marks a significant step forward in expanding mental health accessibility. However, these platforms primarily serve a psychological support function rather than offering full psychiatric interventions, as prescriptions and advanced clinical treatments often require in-person evaluations. Nevertheless, the increasing reliance on digital mental health solutions underscores the critical role of technology in addressing Africa's mental health crisis.

Corporate engagement in mental health advocacy must transcend token initiatives and become deeply embedded within organizational policies. Employee assistance programs, mindfulness training, resilience workshops, and flexible work arrangements are essential components of a comprehensive mental health strategy. Companies that invest in employee well-being not only enhance productivity and reduce turnover rates but also contribute to broader societal efforts to de-stigmatize mental health.

As digital mental health solutions continue to gain traction, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in early diagnosis and intervention is becoming increasingly relevant. AI-powered chatbots and mental health apps can provide preliminary support, detect patterns of distress, and offer self-guided therapy programs to employees who may be hesitant to seek professional help. While these tools are not a substitute for in-person psychiatric care, they serve as a crucial first step in recognizing mental health challenges and encouraging individuals to pursue further assistance. Companies that integrate AI-driven mental health solutions into their wellness programs can offer employees an added layer of support, ensuring that mental health care is accessible at all times.

Cultural narratives around mental health must also shift to facilitate broader acceptance and support. In many African societies, mental health discussions remain clouded by misconceptions and stigma, often deterring individuals from seeking help. Businesses, media organizations, and advocacy groups must actively work to reshape public perceptions by normalizing mental health conversations, showcasing success stories of individuals who have sought treatment, and promoting workplace cultures where mental wellness is prioritized. When organizations lead by example, they not only improve employee well-being but also contribute to dismantling deeply ingrained societal taboos, fostering a future where mental health is recognized as integral to both professional and personal success.

The intersection of mental health and workplace wellness necessitates a revolutionary change in how African businesses and policymakers approach workforce management. The future of work hinges on an environment that acknowledges and supports mental health as an indispensable factor in organizational sustainability and economic progress. The integration of intergenerational perspectives, technological advancements, and structured mental health policies will determine the trajectory of workplace well-being in Africa. Cultivating an inclusive and supportive corporate culture helps organizations pave the way for a future where mental health is not limited to being an afterthought but a fundamental pillar of professional life.

PARTICIPANT'S SPOTLIGHT

Redefining Africa's Workforce for Sustainable Growth and Development

By Dr. Justice Derefaka - Asset Manager, Production Sharing Contract (PSC) at NNPC Upstream Investment Services (NUIMS)



'Are we truly prepared to harness the full potential of a multi-generational workforce while ensuring sustainable, inclusive economic growth'?

From a follow-up interview with Dr. Justice, it was evident that this question is a developmental imperative deeply tied to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). There is an urgent need to acknowledge and optimize the strengths of a workforce spanning four distinct generations, each contributing unique perspectives, skill sets, and expectations.

Today's workforce comprises four distinct generations, each bringing unique strengths, perspectives, and challenges to workplace dynamics. Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are the experienced leaders often characterized by their deep institutional knowledge and preference for hierarchical structures. Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, serves as the bridge generation, seamlessly blending traditional work models with modern innovations. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, are the digital natives who advocate for flexibility, purpose-driven work, and technological integration. Lastly, Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, represents the innovation accelerators, with high digital fluency, entrepreneurial mindsets, and expectations for rapid career progression. The coexistence of these diverse generations in the workforce introduces inevitable challenges, particularly in communication, collaboration, and workplace adaptation.

The intergenerational workforce landscape is closely linked to the SDGs. SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) form the foundation for inclusive and productive multi-generational workplaces that drive social and economic

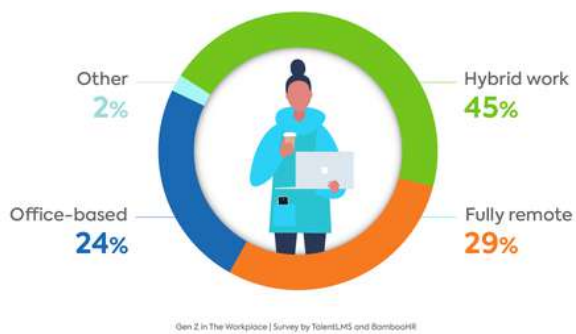
progress. In addition, SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure) highlights the role of digital transformation in workplace adaptability, while SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) underscores the importance of promoting equal opportunities for all age groups in employment and leadership. Ignoring the challenges posed by intergenerational differences risks widening socio-economic inequalities, stagnating workforce productivity, and undermining long-term global competitiveness.

Drawing from global best practices, workforce transformation strategies can serve as models for Africa's unique labor market realities. In Japan, where nearly 30% of the population is over the age of 65, workforce adaptation measures such as senior employment policies, automation of labor-intensive sectors, and structured mentorship programs have been implemented to ensure knowledge transfer and sustained productivity. These efforts align with SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure), ensuring continuous workforce participation and leveraging technology to offset demographic shifts.

Similarly, Germany's dual-vocational education system has successfully bridged generational workforce gaps by integrating structured, industry-based training into formal education. This model enhances technical and practical skills training (SDG 4 – Quality Education) while reducing unemployment through structured career pathways (SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth). Such policies highlight the importance of mentorship, lifelong learning, and digital transformation as key enablers of intergenerational workforce sustainability.

However, Africa's workforce landscape presents distinct opportunities and challenges. With over 60% of its population under 25 years old, Africa possesses the world's youngest workforce. While this demographic advantage has the potential to drive economic transformation, it also presents significant risks if not managed effectively. The Journal of African Development (2022) asserts that to fully realize its demographic dividend, Africa must focus on education, digital transformation, and intergenerational collaboration.

How Gen Z employees prefer to work



Several challenges persist within Africa's workforce. Youth unemployment remains a pressing concern, with millions of young Africans struggling to secure meaningful employment. This contributes to high levels of frustration, underemployment, increased brain drain, and rising socio-economic instability. Furthermore, Africa faces a skills mismatch, as traditional education systems have not kept pace with modern industry requirements. Many young professionals graduate with limited digital competencies, minimal industry exposure, and a lack of practical, job-ready skills.

The intergenerational divide in workplace culture further exacerbates these challenges. Older generations in leadership positions may resist adopting new technologies, flexible work models, and modern workplace structures, while younger professionals, accustomed to digital-first environments, often struggle with corporate hierarchies and bureaucratic constraints. Without deliberate intervention, Africa risks failing to harness its demographic advantage, thereby compromising economic growth and workforce sustainability.

To address these challenges, Africa must adopt SDG-aligned strategies to transform its workforce. Educational reforms, particularly in SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure), are essential. Introducing digital skills training, AI integration, and entrepreneurship programs within school curricula will equip young professionals with relevant competencies. Additionally, investment in STEM education and vocational training will ensure that education aligns with evolving market demands.

Public-private partnerships (SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth) play a crucial role in fostering mentorship programs, bridging intergenerational knowledge gaps, and expanding industry-led workforce initiatives. Similarly, workplace inclusivity (SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities) must be prioritized through hybrid work models, flexible career paths, and equitable workplace policies that support both young and older professionals.

Nigeria, in particular, faces a complex workforce conundrum. As the country approaches becoming the world's third most populous nation by 2030, its workforce dynamics will significantly influence economic stability and

global competitiveness. The Cambridge Journal of African Economies (2023) emphasizes that Nigeria's workforce requires strategic policy interventions to integrate generational expertise and ensure equitable access to opportunities.

Persistent workforce challenges in Nigeria include high youth unemployment, underutilization of older professionals' expertise, and rigid corporate structures that inhibit young professionals' career growth. Addressing these issues necessitates a multi-faceted approach:

- **Structured Mentorship & Knowledge Transfer (SDG 8 & SDG 10):** Establishing national mentorship networks and intergenerational workplace leadership programs will facilitate knowledge-sharing between experienced professionals and emerging talent.
- **Digital Upskilling & Future-Ready Workforce (SDG 4 & SDG 9):** Scaling up nationwide digital training initiatives will prepare the workforce for emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, and green energy sectors.
- **Inclusive Workforce Policies (SDG 8 & SDG 10):** Developing labor policies that promote intergenerational employment strategies will create more dynamic, adaptive work environments.

The urgency of rethinking workplace wellness is an integral component of intergenerational workforce sustainability. Mental health, often overlooked in African corporate settings, plays a pivotal role in workplace efficiency and productivity. The psychological strains associated with generational conflicts, job insecurity, and rapid technological disruptions can lead to burnout, reduced engagement, and heightened workplace stress. For organizations to maximize the full potential of a multi-generational workforce, mental health and well-being must be prioritized.

In high-pressure work environments, Baby Boomers and Generation X employees may be accustomed to a culture of resilience and perseverance, often viewing discussions on mental health as secondary to job performance. Conversely, Millennials and Generation Z professionals increasingly advocate for mental wellness initiatives, recognizing the correlation between work-life balance and overall productivity. Organizations must therefore establish mental health policies that cater to diverse generational needs while fostering open dialogue on workplace wellness. Organizations should establish intergenerational dialogue forums, workplace mindfulness programs, and proactive stress mitigation techniques that enhance mental well-being and organizational harmony.



Closing Charge

The realities of multigenerational differences in the workplace continue to shape how organizations function, influence leadership strategies, and impact mental health dynamics. Mr Amaechi Okobi, Chief Brand and Communications Officer – Access Holdings Plc, shared a compelling narrative illustrating this shift by recalling a deeply personal moment between ‘him and his son’. When the son, at a young age, did something upsetting and was disciplined, he expressed dissatisfaction with how his father handled the situation. Reflecting on his own childhood, he (the father) realized that had he reacted to his own father in such a way, the consequences would have been far more severe. This anecdote validates the profound changes in societal norms, parenting styles, and interpersonal relationships that have evolved over time, shaping the current workforce.



Mr. Amaechi Okobi- Chief Brand and Communications Officer, Access Holdings

The generational transformation in workplace expectations is rooted in these broader societal shifts. In previous generations, children were expected to understand their parents, anticipate their needs, and navigate relationships with deference. Today, this expectation has reversed; it is now parents who must make concerted efforts to understand their children. The same dynamic plays out in the professional environment, where organizations must recognize and adapt to the evolving priorities, values, and well-being concerns of younger employees.

Modern job seekers, particularly from younger generations, enter the workforce with a fundamentally different mindset compared to previous cohorts. When

considering employment opportunities, they are no longer solely focused on what they can offer an organization but are equally – if not more, concerned with what the organization can do for them. The traditional employer-employee dynamic, where workers were expected to comply without question, has shifted dramatically. Now, prospective employees pose critical questions during job interviews: Why should I work for you? What will you do for me? What is your stance on mental health? These inquiries reflect a deeper awareness of workplace wellness and a growing demand for environments that prioritize psychological safety, work-life balance, and mental health support structures.

One of the most significant areas of focus in contemporary workplace discussions is the concept of work flexibility and mental health accommodation. The younger workforce actively challenges long-standing corporate practices that have prioritized relentless productivity over individual well-being. Issues such as remote work opportunities, mental health leave, and resistance to excessive workloads have gained prominence. Employees now advocate for reasonable work hours, flexibility in work arrangements, and the right to disconnect after working hours. The shift in mentality is evident in their reluctance to accept long hours without adequate compensation, their preference for remote or hybrid work models, and their insistence on maintaining personal time outside of work commitments. The traditional expectation of late-night office hours and weekend shifts, once considered the hallmark of dedication, is now viewed through the lens of mental health sustainability and personal well-being.

The younger generation is undeniably driven by financial incentives, but their motivation is not limited to monetary rewards. They place a strong emphasis on how many hours they can work remotely, how their mental health needs will be addressed, and how organizations align with their values. Unlike their predecessors, they are not willing to endure workplaces that neglect employee wellness, dismiss mental health conversations, or impose outdated hierarchical structures that discourage

open communication. They expect a workplace culture that acknowledges their need for balance, mental clarity, and professional growth without compromising their psychological well-being.

This change in expectations is further amplified by the increased awareness of mental health advocacy, particularly within the African context. Traditionally, discussions around mental health were often stigmatized, dismissed, or misunderstood in professional settings. However, today's workforce demands a more progressive and informed approach. Organizations must now actively engage in conversations about workplace mental health, implement policies that foster a supportive environment, and acknowledge the impact of stress, anxiety, and burnout on employee performance. Mental health awareness has become a key determinant in job satisfaction, retention, and overall workplace harmony.

The younger workforce, having grown up in a digital-first era, leverages technology for efficiency, communication, and work optimization. Their fluency in technology gives them an edge in adapting to new systems, streamlining processes, and challenging traditional methods that may no longer be effective. While this rapid adoption of technology offers significant benefits, it also introduces complexities in bridging the gap between different generations within the workforce. The older generation, often accustomed to more conventional approaches, may struggle to keep pace with these technological advancements, leading to potential disconnects in workplace collaboration.

Despite these generational differences, the younger workforce brings valuable insights, innovation, and fresh perspectives to the table. While they may not always exhibit the resilience characteristic of older generations who endured rigid work environments, they contribute significantly to workplace evolution. They challenge outdated norms, advocate for inclusive policies, and introduce forward-thinking ideas that drive organizational growth. Their emphasis on workplace wellness, mental health inclusivity, and work-life integration ultimately fosters a healthier and more sustainable work environment for all employees, irrespective of age.

The ongoing transformation in workplace culture, driven by a younger, more conscious workforce, compels organizations to rethink their approach to employee well-being. It is no longer sufficient to offer competitive salaries alone; employees now seek workplaces that respect their mental health, provide flexibility, and foster an environment of mutual understanding and support. As workplaces continue to advance, the need for inclusive policies that bridge the generational divide and create psychologically safe workspaces will remain paramount in sustaining employee engagement, productivity, and overall job satisfaction.

Organizations that recognize and embrace these shifting workforce dynamics stand to gain a competitive advantage in talent retention and organizational success. Companies that fail to adapt to these evolving expectations risk high turnover rates, low employee morale, and reduced overall productivity. To remain relevant, businesses must actively invest in mental health programs, provide access to professional counseling, and develop workplace structures that empower employees to thrive. This means creating an open culture where employees feel safe discussing stress, anxiety, and work-related challenges without fear of stigma or retaliation. Forward-thinking organizations are already integrating well-being initiatives into their operational strategies, signaling a progressive shift in how businesses approach employee engagement.

In addition to mental health considerations, the concept of workplace mentorship and intergenerational knowledge transfer has become increasingly critical. Older professionals possess institutional knowledge, industry experience, and leadership wisdom that, when shared effectively, can help younger employees navigate the complexities of their careers. However, traditional hierarchical mentorship models are being redefined into more dynamic, two-way exchanges where younger professionals also contribute valuable insights, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, emerging technologies, and new business strategies. Creating structured mentorship programs that promote cross-generational learning fosters collaboration and ensures that businesses retain critical knowledge while staying adaptable in a rapidly changing work environment.

Governments, industry leaders, and corporate policymakers must collaborate to establish frameworks that support a healthier, more inclusive workforce. This includes revising labor laws to reflect modern work expectations, incentivizing companies that invest in employee well-being, and promoting mental health awareness campaigns that reshape societal attitudes.

Another key factor influencing modern workplace dynamics is the increasing prioritization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethical business practices. The younger workforce is particularly attuned to the values and ethical standing of the organizations they work for. Employees are more inclined to align with companies that demonstrate a genuine commitment to sustainability, diversity, and social impact. This extends beyond superficial branding efforts; workers want to see tangible action in areas such as corporate environmental responsibility, fair labor practices, and equitable workplace policies. Businesses that authentically integrate these values into their operational framework not only attract top talent but also enhance their brand reputation and build stronger connections with employees and consumers alike.

RECOMMENDATIONS

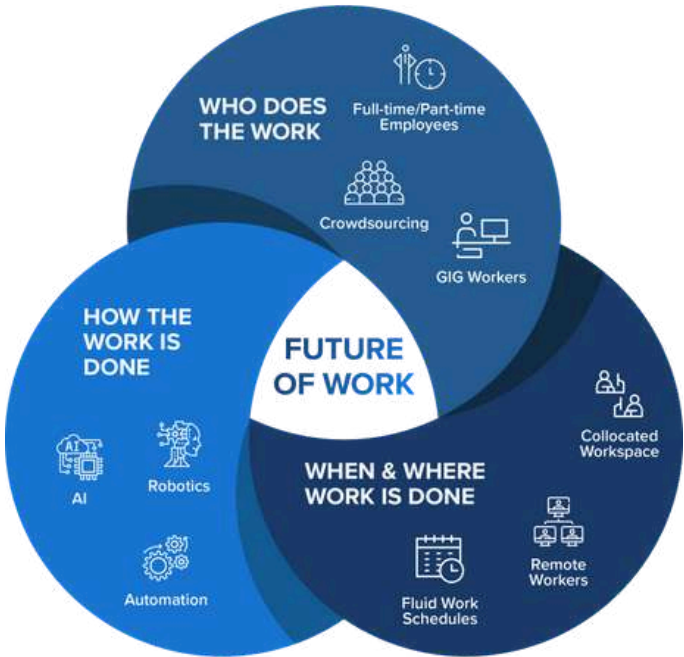
Recognizing Organizational Health and Safety (OHS) Global standards and principles as basic employees' rights is crucial to protecting lives, promoting decent work, and achieving economic and social benefits. Employers within governments, local and international organizations must pay reasonable attention to fulfilling antecedent obligations, upholding the health and safety of employees, and improving workers' physical, emotional, mental health, and wellness. This commitment is particularly vital in Africa, where workplace health challenges are compounded by economic disparities, limited access to mental health services, and cultural stigmas surrounding psychological well-being.

Enforce existing regulations: Enforcing existing regulations is fundamental to ensuring that businesses not only comply with tax obligations but also adhere to workplace health and safety policies. Governments at local, national, and sub-national levels must strengthen the enforcement of occupational health and safety regulations by conducting regular inspections and applying penalties for non-compliance. In Africa, where many workplaces still lack adequate mental health policies, governments must take a more proactive stance in ensuring that businesses implement measures to protect employees' psychological well-being alongside physical health.

Develop new policies: This is essential as the nature of work evolves. Policymakers should adopt a forward-thinking approach, introducing workplace health policies that include mandatory mental health programs aimed at improving emotional resilience, social and cognitive intelligence, and overall well-being. Occupational disease surveillance, ergonomics standards, and structured wellness initiatives should be incorporated into workplace regulations, ensuring a comprehensive approach to employee health. Collaboration between governments, businesses, and labor organizations is crucial to making these policies effective and sustainable.

Prioritize training and awareness campaigns: Businesses should conduct regular health training sessions that emphasize the importance of physical and mental health, safety protocols, and preventive measures. Employees should be well-informed about their rights and responsibilities concerning workplace health, including the significance of routine health screenings, personal hygiene, and wellness practices. Given the cultural stigma surrounding mental health in many African communities, targeted awareness campaigns should be designed to dismantle misconceptions and encourage open discussions about psychological well-being.

Drive proactive workplace health initiatives: Organizations should institutionalize basic health programs such as annual medical check-ups, vaccinations, and lifestyle management programs. More importantly, they should develop initiatives that promote mental health awareness, including counseling services, open grievance mechanisms, anonymous feedback channels, and stress management techniques. In African workplaces, where high workloads and limited job security contribute to workplace stress, fostering a supportive environment can help employees manage psychological pressures more effectively.



Strengthen workplace health infrastructure: Beyond investing in proper facilities with clean water, good airflow, and sanitation, companies should collaborate with hospitals and health insurance providers (HMOs) to offer affordable healthcare coverage that includes both physical and mental health services. In many African countries, where access to quality healthcare remains a challenge, integrating workplace wellness programs with existing healthcare structures can bridge gaps and ensure employees receive the support they need.

Encourage investments in workplace health: African public and private sectors can collaborate to drive investments in workplace health programs, leveraging studies that demonstrate the impact of employee well-being on productivity. As remote and hybrid work models become more prevalent, a clear focus on mental and emotional health can be even more impactful. Employers should explore innovative strategies such as digital mental health platforms, teletherapy services, and resilience-building programs to support employees in adapting to changing work environments.

CONCLUSION

Mental health in the workplace is not simply a policy consideration but an essential determinant of employee productivity, organizational efficiency, and overall workplace culture. The ability to address mental wellness through structured, inclusive, and targeted interventions is crucial in ensuring a holistic approach to workforce management. One of the critical aspects highlighted is the necessity of age-inclusive strategies that cater to varying generational experiences, challenges, and perspectives in workplace wellness programs.

Creating a work environment that promotes open communication about mental health issues is essential in breaking down barriers and stigma. Many employees, especially those in younger or older age brackets, often find it difficult to seek help due to societal and professional stigmatization of mental health struggles. Publications, particularly those tailored to workplace mental wellness, serve as a powerful medium for normalizing these discussions, offering evidence-based strategies and human interest stories that encourage employees to share their experiences, seek help, and access supportive resources.

Organizations must adopt a proactive stance by integrating mental health literacy into corporate training programs. Providing leadership with the necessary knowledge and tools to identify signs of mental distress, offer appropriate support, and implement workplace policies that prioritize psychological safety is crucial. Establishing peer-support groups, facilitating mentorship programs, and designing wellness initiatives that consider diverse generational needs can significantly contribute to a mentally healthy work environment.

Equally important is the role of media, particularly magazines and digital publications, in shaping workplace attitudes towards mental health. Through well-researched articles, testimonials, and expert insights, such platforms help deconstruct harmful myths, provide practical solutions, and highlight the intersection of workplace policies with mental well-being. Employees equipped with knowledge and a supportive environment are better positioned to navigate workplace stressors, ultimately leading to higher retention rates, improved morale, and increased productivity.

Technology also plays a significant role in modern workplace wellness strategies. Digital tools, including AI-driven mental health applications, employee assistance programs, and teletherapy services, are revolutionizing the way organizations approach mental health support. Employers must leverage these innovations to provide accessible, confidential, and effective mental health solutions for their workforce.

Fostering a culture that values mental wellness as much as physical health requires continuous education, strong leadership commitment, and the willingness to adapt to emerging challenges in workforce dynamics. A generationally inclusive approach that considers the unique experiences, expectations, and challenges faced by different age groups is fundamental in ensuring the long-term sustainability of workplace wellness initiatives.

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Their dedication to advancing Africa's socioeconomic landscape, particularly through private sector-led initiatives, has been instrumental in shaping forward-thinking policies and actionable strategies. Under their leadership, ABCHealth continues to drive critical conversations and champion initiatives that foster sustainable, inclusive, and future-ready workplaces across the continent.

This report encapsulates key insights from the ABCHealth webinar, Bridging Inter-Generational Mind-Gap for the Future of Work: An African Perspective, a platform that convened thought leaders, industry experts, and policymakers to deliberate on one of the most pressing challenges of our time, the evolving dynamics between different generations in the workforce.

ABCHealth expresses its sincere gratitude to all distinguished speakers, panelists, participants, and esteemed partners who contributed their expertise, shared invaluable perspectives, and engaged in thought-provoking dialogue during the session. We look forward to building on these insights to shape policies and initiatives that will empower both present and future generations for meaningful contributions to Africa's economic growth and development.

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