

FGAI4H-N-055-A02

E-meeting, 15-17 February 2022

Source: WG-CO

Title: Att.2 - Harnessing the power of AI for Africa's development

Purpose: Discussion

Contact: Rob Beyer
Villgro Africa

E-mail: robbeyer@villgroafrica.org

Abstract: This PPT contains a presentation from the "Catalysing Digital and AI Innovations for Health: Sharing Experiences from Africa and Asia" series.

Harnessing the Power of AI for Africa's Development

An Overview

Our Background

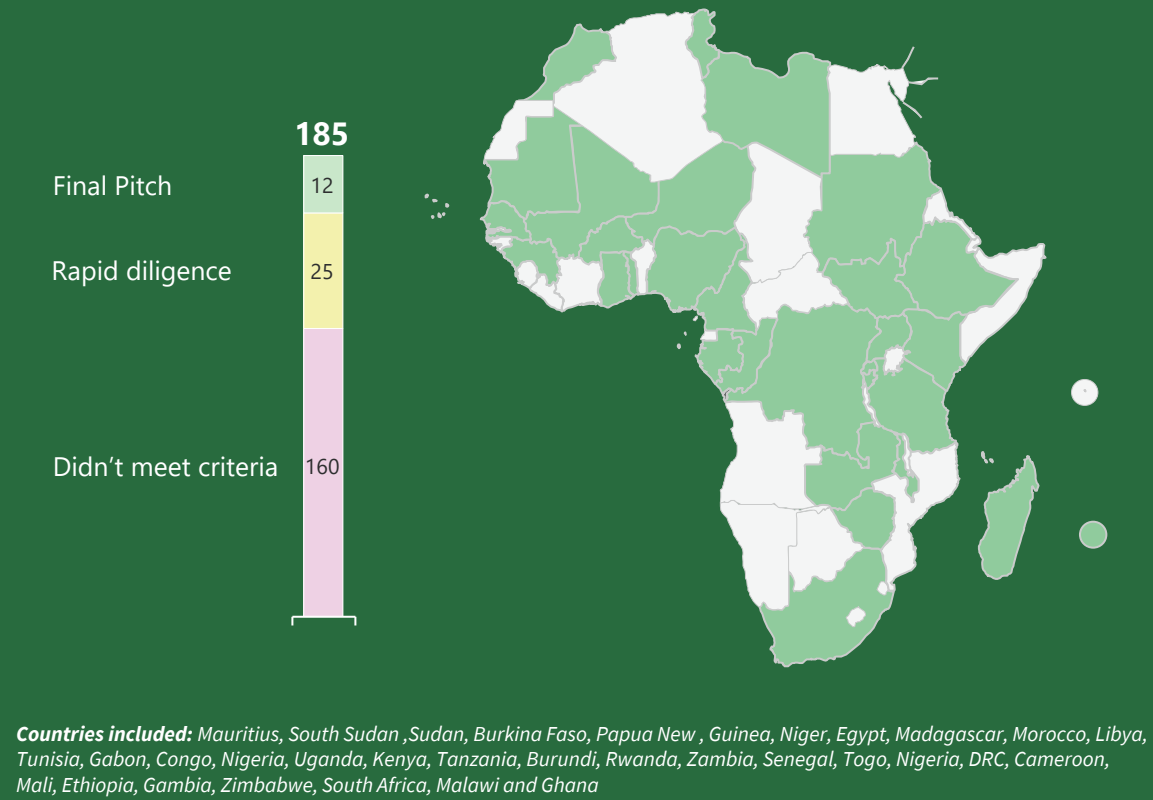
- Villgro Africa was first established in 2015 (known then as Villgro Kenya) to serve **a nascent global health innovation ecosystem** on the African continent.
- The sector choice was informed by the lack of focused support in **health and life sciences research and innovation**.
- Over the last 6 years, Villgro Africa supported over **40 innovators**, invested more than **\$1.3 Mn in seed funding** in companies that have gone on to unlock over **\$18 million in follow on funding** and touching **over 1.8 million lives** in East Africa.
- Villgro Africa funding partners include **Argidius Foundation, Lemelson Foundation, IDRC, AI4D, USAID, Grand Challenges Canada, Saving Lives @ Birth, Johnson & Johnson Impact Ventures, Villgro Innovations Foundation (India), Villgro USA & Villgro Philippines, among others**
- In March 2021, launched a pan-African call for innovations entitled **“Harnessing the Power of AI for Africa’s Development”**.

What we excel in

- 1 **Screening & Selection** - Our context specific and rigorous selection process allows us to back suitable **implementing partners** (portfolio companies) for programmatic funders.
- 2 **TA** - We offer hands on customized **technical assistance** to our investees. We bolster their **internal capacity** by embedding our portfolio managers.
- 3 **SEED Capital** – We **Leverage** our funders to offer direct **Patient Capital** to Villgro portfolio companies and apply our **de-risking mechanism** and investment readiness support to help unlock **follow on funding**.
- 4 **Thematic Calls** – We identify **priority areas** and put a targeted call for innovations and manage the portfolio over the next 2-3 years. Good example is the recent call for AI innovations in Africa in partnership with AI4D funded by IDRC/SIDA
- 5 **Ecosystem Building** – Interlinking with Academia, Government, Private Sector and Corporates to collaborate on Go-to-Market partnerships that allow Hardware innovations/SMEs/Startups to thrive.
- 6 **Market Entry Support**– We support Global Health Innovators that want to enter any new market in East Africa.
- 7 **Jaza Rift Fund (\$30mn)**– Next round of funding \$200K to \$800K to Villgro portfolio companies and other promising healthcare ventures outside our portfolio.

We received 187 applications from 32 countries across Africa, including 28 from francophone countries

25 companies (3 from francophone countries) proceeded to our due diligence process, where 12 of them (2 from francophone countries) were selected for a final pitch



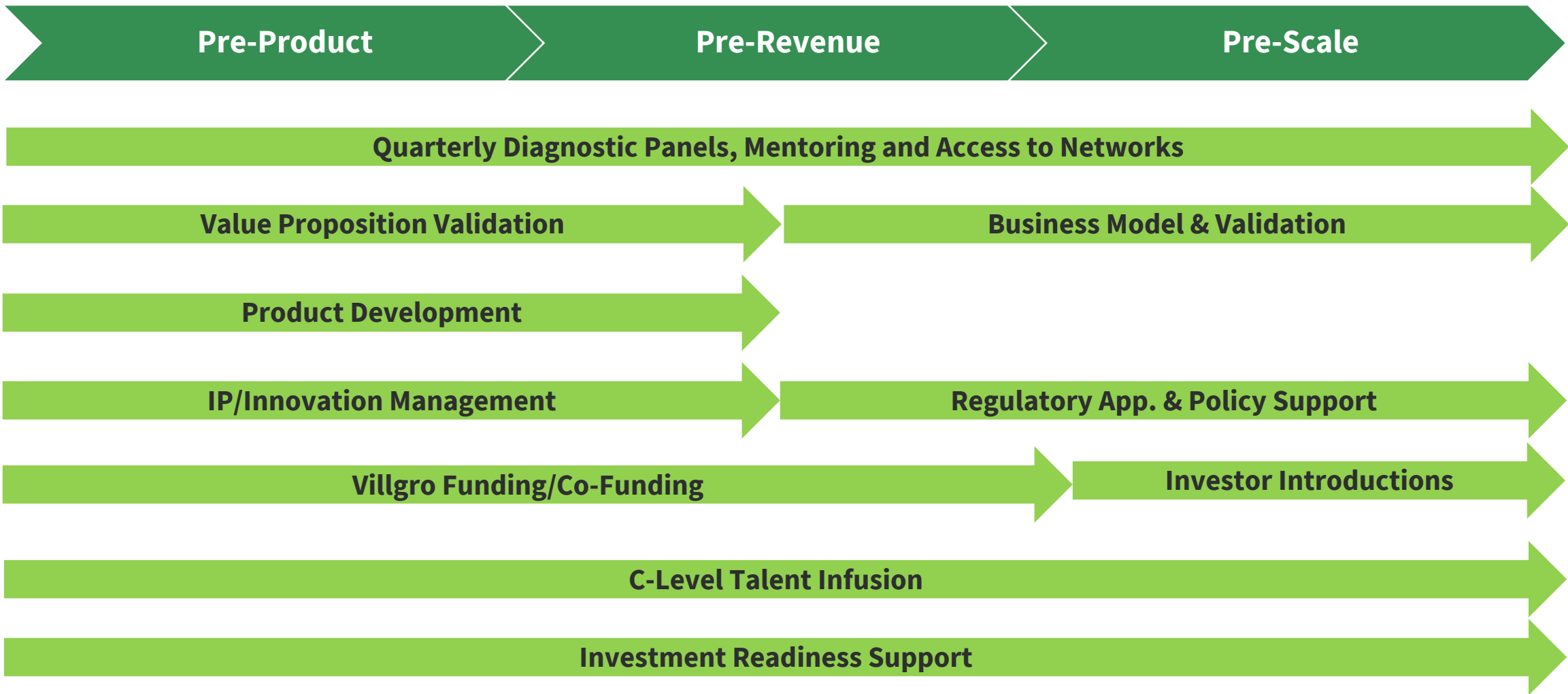
Shortlisted for final pitch

Company name	Country	Sector
AGRIX	Cameroon	Agriculture (Agritech)
Agripoa	Mauritius/ Tanzania	Agriculture (Agritech)
Redefine Africa Ltd	Tanzania	Finance (Financial banking)
XSENSEAI Company Ltd	Tanzania	Healthcare (Detection and Diagnosis)
Ocular (Makerere AI Lab)	Nigeria	Healthcare (Detection and Diagnosis)
Dawa Health	Zambia	Healthcare (Maternal Healthcare)
Korenti Health	Ethiopia	Healthcare (Record Keeping)
Sekani	Kenya	Healthcare (Telecommunication)
Naana Technologies	Burkina Faso	Healthcare (Detection and Diagnosis)
Yelenkoura Technologie	Mali	Healthcare (Assistive Technologies)
Brain Tumor Detection	Senegal	Healthcare (Detection and Diagnosis)
Streamline	Uganda	Healthcare (Community insurance)

General Observations from the Program

Observation	Description
General lack of understanding of what constitutes “AI”	Not a strong awareness of AI or it’s appropriate deployment and related challenges. Many are self-taught with low understanding on ethics, risks, etc.
Lack of Awareness of Ethical Issues	Issues/Concerns around data collection, use and dissemination are largely nascent
There is promise towards scale and impact.	Across the continent, there are innovations that are showing promise towards commercialization and/or scale
The Quest to “Monetize Data”	Towards sustainability goals, many companies are trying to figure out how they can monetize their data – this remains very elusive.
The Threat (Opportunity?) of Big Tech	Among innovators, there is growing sense the larger companies will eventually move in and eventually dominate the market
General lack of cohesion in the AI ecosystem	Opportunities clearly exist to enhance collaborations through intentional efforts in ecosystem development.

Villgro Africa's Support Model



Challenges in making private sector investment and Villgro's alignment to addressing them

Challenge	Villgro's offering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Lack of Strong Sector Focused Innovation Ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Using a Triple Helix Approach Villgro is able to convene different actors from Academia, Private Sector and Government. ✓ Villgro Africa has had a 6-year track record making healthcare investments in East Africa. This has afforded us lessons, domain expertise and academia-industry linkages that can further be enhanced by bringing on board partners to form an Industrial Cluster.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Lack of implementation capacity (Lack of skills & C-Level Talent). Often Scientists lack the business acumen required to commercialize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Using our 6-point de-risking mechanism that touches on i) Team ii) Business model iii) Investability iv) Product v) Exit feasibility to help build capacity we are help innovators to focus on all the aspects of building a business. ✓ The Team aspect of the de-risking mechanism mentioned above allows us to see gaps in the team skill set and team dynamics and produce a customized mitigation strategy. ✓ Villgro Africa has also helped entrepreneurs to head hunt for complimentary skillsets for a C-Level position and formalize advisory boards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Lack of Leverage/Limited Matching Fund partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Over the last 6 years, we have invested close to USD 1.2mn as SEED funding directly to healthcare startups. This has unlocked USD 18mn dollars as direct leverage. We tend to be first money in. Our de-risking mechanism increases the chances of companies to raise follow on funding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Lack of Staying power and patience capital by other investors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Our incubation program is multi-year ranging from 2 to 3 yrs. and highly customized to suit individual entrepreneur needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Restrictive policies and regulations in academia that impede creation of spin-off companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advisory support to institutions to help them set up tech transfer offices with innovator friendly policies

Our Team



Wilfred Njagi

Co-founder & Chief Executive Officer

Wilfred Njagi has over 10 years experience working in Tech startups, business development, social entrepreneurship, impact investing and incubation support. He has international work experience in Middle East, Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. He holds a MBA in Global Business and Sustainability



Rob Beyer

Co-founder & Executive Chairman

Rob Beyer brings a unique combination of seasoned experience in senior administration and business development roles. As a visionary leader he is energized by opportunities to create market-based partnerships that improve livelihoods while increasing financial inclusion and gender equality of opportunity.



Robert Karanja

Co-founder & Chief Research Officer

Dr. Robert Karanja has over 15 years working experience in academia and development entrepreneurship. His key enterprise is in biomedical research, health systems strengthening, intellectual property, technology commercialization & social entrepreneurship. He holds a Ph.D. in Parasitology and Entomology.



Wambui Nyabero

Chief Technology Officer

Eng. Wambui Nyabero is an inventor and innovator who is passionate about the healthcare industry. She has over 20 years of experience directing change and growth within both small and large enterprises in the U.S. She holds a M.S in Manufacturing Systems Engineering from Stanford University.



Franciscah Nzanga

Operations Director

Franciscah Nzanga has gathered significant years of experience in the Micro-insurance sector on project management, product design, operations strategy, actuarial pricing, process design as well as risk management. She has a background in actuarial science and holds a MBA in Financial Decision making.

Our Team



Jackson Mwatha

Corporate Finance & Advisory

Jackson Mwatha is a management and corporate finance consultant with over 9 years of experience working with early and growth-phase enterprises in achieving their strategic and capital raising goals. He holds a MBA in Global Business & Sustainability.



Moses Waweru

Senior Programs Manager

Moses Waweru is a seasoned fund raising consultant with over 6 years experience. His key expertise lie in conducting diligence, qualitative research, technical & proposal writing, program design and management. He holds a M.S in Global Health



Immanuel Momanyi

Senior Portfolio Manager

Immanuel Momanyi has multi-sectoral experience working first hand with businesses across Sub-Saharan Africa to develop business strategies, financial models and analysis, data analysis, market research and actuarial valuation. He holds a B.S in Actuarial Science.



Snider Mugese

Finance Lead & Portfolio Analyst

Snider Mugese is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Investments and Financial Analyst. She leads the finance department, participates in performing due diligence and provides technical assistance to our portfolio companies. She holds a B.S in Financial Engineering.



Deogratias Mzurikwao

AI Sector Lead

Dr. Deogratias Mzurikwao has over 6 years experience in the Artificial Intelligence sector on research and development. He is skilled in python, machine learning, deep learning, data science and pattern recognition. He holds a Ph.D. in Artificial Intelligence from University of Kent

Our Team



Joelle Mumley

Communications Lead

Joelle Mumley is an experienced writer and entrepreneur. She has a history of writing and editing within various industries including health technology, business development, finance and recreation. She holds a M.A in Social Entrepreneurship.



Edwin Osora

Business Analyst

Edwin Osora has over 3 years experience working in the insurance sector. He provides analytical and technical skills for conducting market research and scouting, screening & selection of innovative startups for incubation. He holds a B.S in Actuarial Science.



Amadi Growman

Junior Investment Associate

Amadi Growman has a history in examining and validating the accuracy of data. His key skills include, conducting diligence reports, qualitative & quantitative research and development of the ecosystem. He holds a B.S in Actuarial Science.



Loice Shirwa

Junior Accountant

Loice Shirwa is currently pursuing her CPA. Her key skills are creating, analyzing, examining and interpreting financial reports and statements. She also provides support in carrying out due diligence on startups across East Africa. She holds a B.Com in Accounting and Finance.

Who supports us



Our partners and networks



[Strathmore University](#)



[Tangaza University College](#)



[PATH](#)



[AMREF](#)



[mHealth](#)



[ISHOW](#)



