

FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Africa has become the testing ground for modern technological leapfrogging. This involves skipping stages and moving rapidly to the frontiers of innovation. Technological leapfrogging has so far, focused on economic transformation and more importantly the basic services like health and education.

Today, I choose to focus on African healthcare. In Africa, telemedicine has enabled health tech platforms to emerge and allowed doctors to work remotely, efficiently and cheaply via mobile devices. The continent is getting more interconnected, and given the increasing mobile penetration and low digitization costs, Africa is bound to leapfrog traditional healthcare to achieve economical viable health coverage. In Uganda, health workers use MTRAC, an SMS-based tech connecting hospitals to the national drug chain. In Kenya, citizens can check the authenticity of a drug via an SMS.

The use of Drones is a technology gaining publicity. Zipline is a remarkable company in Rwanda changing the maternal mortality tale. It is using lightweight plane shaped drones to deliver mostly blood, and emergency medication. The drones use network which automatically leads them to a hospital using cellular signals. It was initially aimed for mothers with haemorrhage however, it works in all medical emergencies. Tanzania also just adapted the same system.

Digitization of health records is a critical step in analyzing mass public health information. In 2014, the inability to capture and share data prolonged the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. New platforms have however emerged to address this issue. AMPIS in Nigeria, turns hard copies of medical data into electronic health records for improved communication among stakeholders. Other countries including Tanzania, Ghana and Zambia are adapting the same technology.

3D printed prosthetic limbs is the next revolution in modern medicine. This technology has enabled 3D printed skin for burn victims and prosthetic for people involved in accidents. This tech has provide a cheaper and readily available option for patients, doctors and engineers.

In conclusion, we see that alot of new technologies promise to have a huge impact on Africa. Africa is not accepting to be left behind and it will leap along every step of the way. Better healthcare, combats the biggest problem in Africa; diseases. This increases the man power and the economy of Africa flourishes.