

DELEGATION REPORT

Building Bridges Investor Delegation to the 2025 AVPA Conference

November 3–5, 2025 | Nairobi, Kenya
AVPA Conference | Trademark Hotel




BUILDING BRIDGES
Aligning finance with sustainability

 **avpa** AFRICAN VENTURE PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE

In partnership with:

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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 **AVCA**

 AFRICAN NATURAL CAPITAL ALLIANCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Building Bridges delegation to the 2025 AVPA conference (Nairobi, Kenya, 3–5 Nov 2025) successfully re-connected its **22 delegates** with Africa’s impact ecosystem, while enabling meaningful peer exchange within the delegation itself. The conference convened over **400 social investors and impact leaders**, uniting diverse perspectives under the theme “*Future-Proofing Africa: Driving Sustainable Investments and Innovations for Resilient Growth.*” Notably, several members of the delegation also participated as speakers during AVPA sessions, reinforcing the delegation’s presence and helping shape conversations around catalytic capital and innovative finance. Being presented collectively as a Building Bridges delegation provided **strong visibility** to each member individually, positioning the group as a credible contributor to Africa’s impact investing transformation.

The delegation combined focused participation at AVPA with **high-value side events** such as the Swiss Embassy reception, the AVCA networking cocktail, the Kenya Energy Compact breakfast, the ANCA nature roundtable, and field visits. These engagements extended far beyond the conference venue, creating opportunities with a **diverse network of partners and Pan-African organisations**, highlighting the role of Building Bridges in fostering collaboration across the broader Sub-Saharan African ecosystem rather than solely within Nairobi. Together, they generated **high-quality learning sessions, opened direct pathways for follow-ups from Building Bridges 2025** (e.g., around nature finance, the Kenya Energy Compact or impact-linked finance), and helped **build bridges both among delegates themselves and between delegates and ecosystem actors on the continent.**

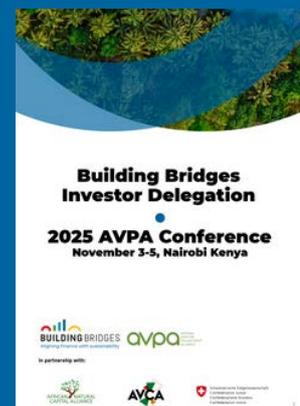
The conference highlighted that Africa’s challenge is not a lack of capital, but a shortage of risk-taking structures and catalytic mechanisms to mobilize it. Blended finance, Impact-Linked Finance, and pooled funds emerged as powerful tools to attract private investment, particularly in underfunded sectors such as mental health, renewable energy, and nature-based solutions. Participants emphasized leveraging domestic pension, sovereign and private wealth, deploying patient capital for industrial and infrastructure growth, and embedding long-term value creation in family office and philanthropic strategies, shifting the focus from risk perception to opportunity.

Logistics and curated networking worked well, and delegates reported **strengthened relationships** not only with Africa’s impact investment ecosystem but also within the delegation itself, leading to new investment-oriented conversations and collaboration prospects. The debriefing underlined that, as this was the second Building Bridges delegation to Kenya, visibility has **increased expectations for tangible Swiss contributions** to African development finance and SDG-aligned capital mobilization. To meet these expectations, participants suggested possible approaches, such as supporting **improved transparency on impact investment performance** and **facilitating the creation of an Africa-focused debt facility with first-loss guarantees to mobilize local and international capital.** Delegates also recommended deeper engagement with **real-economy sectors** (e.g., agriculture, food security, insurance, health, energy), broader **inclusion of entrepreneurial actors**, considering **Francophone Africa** for the future, and maintaining a balanced and thoughtful approach to **African partnerships.**

Programme Overview



Delegate Overview



DAY 1: CATALYTIC CAPITAL FOR IMPACT

Day 1 opened with a strong call to rethink how capital is deployed for impact in Africa, setting the tone for the entire conference. Speakers emphasised that with more than **USD 3 trillion held by African financial institutions**, the core challenge is not a lack of capital but rather a shortage of **risk-taking structures and catalytic mechanisms** capable of mobilising it.

Philanthropy was presented as evolving beyond traditional grants toward **de-risking functions that unlock private and domestic investment**, with a clear message that Africa cannot “grant its way to prosperity.” Empowering local fund managers and mobilising pension and sovereign wealth funds were recurrent priorities, together with reframing Africa’s investment case: despite consistently strong infrastructure returns and **10 of the 15 fastest-growing economies in the world**, the continent remains dramatically underinvested due to persistent risk misperceptions.

The day also showcased **practical examples of catalytic capital in action**, notably the launch of **Africa’s first Mental Health Catalytic Pooled Fund**, introduced by AVPA and the Coalition for Mental Health Investment. The initiative highlighted both the scale of unmet need and the opportunity for catalytic models to develop investable pathways in underfunded sectors. The fund was positioned as a demonstrator of how pooled structures can build confidence and crowd in commercial participation.

Sessions throughout the day deepened the focus on **mobilising capital at scale and transitioning from development cooperation to investment collaboration**. Contributions from SDC, Porticus, the British High Commission and others stressed the need for risk-taking capital to bridge gaps between public intentions and private investment, particularly in the context of contracting ODA budgets. Examples ranged from direct investment into funds in least-developed countries to strategic mechanisms such as SIFI and support for first-time fund managers.





Discussions on blended finance illustrated how well-designed structures can unlock commercial participation. Reflections from one year of the **Africa Social Impact Exchange (ASIEx)** demonstrated the importance of patient capital and hands-on support, robust pipeline development for local founders, and **impact-linked compensation mechanisms**. Several speakers underlined that storytelling, particularly about successful exits, remains crucial for shifting investor perception and building confidence.

The theme of alignment between financial performance and social outcomes continued in the discussion on **Impact-Linked Finance (ILF)**. Presenters shared cases in gender-lens investing, clean water and agricultural SME lending, demonstrating how incentives tied to measurable outcomes can reduce financing costs and enable scale, achieving **leverage ratios of up to 10:1**. ILF was presented as a versatile instrument applicable across debt, equity and hybrid structures, not as a niche or temporary tool.

The day closed with a call to mobilise domestic institutional capital, particularly **pension funds and sovereign wealth funds**, the largest long-term capital pools on the continent. With examples such as **KES 1.3 trillion in Kenyan pension assets (USD 10B)**, speakers urged regulatory reform, trustee capacity building, ESG governance clarity and cross-border collaboration. A proposed **5% Africa allocation target** underscored rising commitment to retaining capital within the continent and investing in real economic transformation. Overall, Day 1 painted a cohesive picture of a maturing African impact investment landscape: rich with opportunity, demanding innovative structures, and increasingly driven by African-led solutions and domestic capital mobilisation.

Swiss Embassy Reception

The Swiss Embassy kindly welcomed the visiting delegation members in an informal setting at the Residence of the Swiss Ambassador to network with key leaders in the local ecosystem. This was an opportunity to meet local investors and partners of the Swiss Embassy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation



DAY 2: PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

On Day 2, the discussions collectively emphasized the urgent need for Africa to **shift from a focus on resource extraction to fostering local production, value creation, and economic transformation**. Across keynote and panel sessions, speakers highlighted the importance of patient capital, long-term value chains, and industrial development as engines for job creation and sustainable growth.

A recurring theme was the disconnect between abundant global capital and African enterprises' access to it, often driven by perceived rather than actual risks. **Challenges such as foreign exchange volatility, the lack of local currency solutions, limited liquidity events, and long investment horizons of 10–15 years for infrastructure and private equity underscore the need for innovative financing structures**. Blended finance was identified as a key tool to bridge this gap, aligning risk perceptions and unlocking institutional capital.

Impact investing was emphasized not merely as a moral imperative but as a pathway to lasting value, requiring careful planning, alignment with long-term goals, and attention to governance to ensure benefits extend beyond immediate financial returns. **Investors, particularly high-net-worth individuals and family offices, are increasingly adopting a legacy-driven approach**, integrating purpose, intergenerational vision, and strong governance into their strategies.

Together, these conversations painted a picture of an African investment landscape poised for transformation. One where patient, principled capital can catalyze sustainable industrial growth, empower local enterprises, and create enduring socio-economic impact.





SIDE EVENT

Innovative Finance Initiative (IFI) Breakfast

The IFI is a time-bound, experimental and collaborative global network aiming to popularise innovative finance and drive mainstream adoption. Speakers framed innovative finance as a combination of structures, incentives and strategies — but stressed that it ultimately depends on people and shared learning.

Community missions, breakouts and field-building approaches were introduced, focused on testing models and tools. The discussion again returned to unlocking domestic capital, with an example citing **USD 27B available in Kenyan pension funds, most of which does not yet reach impact-oriented solutions.**



[Slide Deck](#) - [Recap document](#) – If you're interested to join IFI, you can [apply here](#)

For more info, please contact Maegan Storm Lillis maegan@innovative.finance

AVCA Connect

AVCA, the **African Private Capital Association** acts as the trusted independent source of information, insight, and intelligence inspiring investor confidence; making the case for both commercial returns and impact of private capital in Africa. AVCA Connect is the Association's **signature networking event** bringing together prominent stakeholders across the African private capital ecosystem.

Delegates had the opportunity to engage with local and global institutional investors, fund managers, professional services, and financial and government institutions, spanning various asset classes including private equity, credit, infrastructure, real estate, and venture capital.



DAY 3: IMPACT IN ACTION

SIDE EVENT

Kenya National Energy Compact Breakfast

This high-level session presented **Kenya's strategy to achieve 100% renewable energy and 100% energy access by 2030** as a follow up of the session that took place at **Building Bridges 2025** in Geneva.

Kenya currently generates 93% of its electricity from renewable sources, yet two-thirds of the population still relies on biomass. Implementing the national compact will require USD 19.1B across public and private investment.

Speakers highlighted opportunities around mini-grids, clean cooking, battery storage and local manufacturing. Philanthropic capital was identified as key to enabling last-mile electrification and to de-risking private capital.

Slide deck. For more information, contact Delphine Clerc-Toure, delphine.clerc-toure@undp.org.



SIDE EVENT

Exclusive CEO & Investor Roundtable — Nature Investment Opportunities

Participants discussed the development of scalable nature-based investment models. FSDA presented examples of funds and blended structures supporting forestry, renewable energy and ecotourism, while project developers showcased concrete investable pipelines such as blended NbS projects and REDD+/ARR carbon initiatives.

Discussions highlighted the need for **better market infrastructure, risk-sharing tools and institutional capital commitment**. Strong interest was expressed in scaling nature finance solutions that combine biodiversity, climate and livelihoods.

Brochure Carbon Accelerator Programme for the Environment ANCA (Nature Projects Pitch Book).

Pitch decks: Mitsiry Biodiversity and Climate fund – Blue Forest – New Forests

For more info or contacts, please contact Dorothy Maseke dorothy@fsdafrica.org.





Site Visits

The site visits on Day 3 showcased innovative African solutions across education, agriculture, mobility, mental health, and creative industries, emphasizing scalable impact, local value creation, and sustainable development.

Participants witnessed how **technology and digital platforms are transforming key sectors**: Food4Education's Tap2Eat system and Roam Electric's locally produced **electric vehicles** demonstrated how data-driven, locally tailored solutions can enhance efficiency, reduce emissions, and generate jobs.

In **agriculture**, Tawi Fresh Kenya and Trade Care Africa highlighted digital marketplaces and real-time data platforms that connect farmers to markets, improve incomes, and reduce food waste while offering tailored training and certification support. In **health** and **creative** sectors, Shamiri showcased low-cost, scalable mental health interventions, while D&R Studios illustrated how supporting homegrown storytelling can create skilled jobs, diversify economies, and amplify African narratives globally. **Education** and inclusive finance were brought to life at Oakpark Academy and TechnoServe, where digital lending, integrated procurement, and collective purchasing models demonstrate sustainable approaches to improving learning outcomes and fostering economic opportunity for underserved communities.

Across all visits, the common thread was that **locally designed, technology-enabled, and impact-driven solutions are unlocking Africa's potential** while generating measurable social, economic, and environmental benefits.



DAY 4: OFF-SITE VISITS

Coffee & Catalytic Capital at Delta40 Venture Studio

This informal session hosted in Delta40 Campus explored how innovation, capital, and collaboration can increase incomes, power improved livelihoods, and drive planetary health across Africa.

The session featured short remarks from the Delta40 team, showcased some portfolio founders, and their signature Innovation Gallery spotlighting ventures building solutions that **improve livelihoods across Africa**.

The intention of the session was to enable connections with entrepreneurs, investors, and ecosystem partners driving inclusive growth and impact across the continent.

[Delta40 overview](#) and [Delta40 portfolio overview general](#)



Impact-Linked Finance Driving Social Innovation in East Africa

iGravity organized a field visit to two enterprises supported by the Impact-linked Finance Fund for Eastern and Southern Africa (ILF ESA), an initiative powered by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Fourfold Foundation, Medicor Foundation, Swiss Re Foundation and Aqua for All.

Managed by the ILF Fund—a Dutch foundation established by Roots of Impact and iGravity—**ILF ESA rewards impactful SMEs with improved financing terms**. Since 2021, it has committed USD 4.2 million to 13 enterprises in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, leveraging over USD 9.6 million in additional commercial capital.

Delegates visited Access Afya, which provides affordable primary healthcare and has expanded maternal and chronic care services through SIINC incentives, and Shamba Pride, which **strengthens agricultural supply chains through its DigiShop network, significantly growing climate-smart input distribution**. The visit demonstrated the powerful role of impact-linked finance in scaling social innovation.



Building Bridges for Investment in Africa

Our **Building Bridges for Investment in Africa** thematic programme is formalising around activities that build trust, visibility and access, turning conversations into partnerships and partnerships into capital flows that deliver financial returns alongside positive social and environmental impact.

This programme builds on the relationships developed with multiple actors on the African continent through its yearly flagship event in Geneva, dedicated webinars, and yearly delegations to the continent since 2023. This is a programme and a community built with and for its members, open, practical and focused on action.

Building Bridges is seeking to formalise different levels of partnership to advance its activities and will continue to engage with and develop the Africa Investment Community, most notably through the Africa Investment Connect activity into 2026.

SAVE THE DATE:

- Building Bridges 2026: **6–8 October**, CIGG, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2026 AVPA Conference: **1–4 November**, Mombasa, Kenya

For more information, please contact:

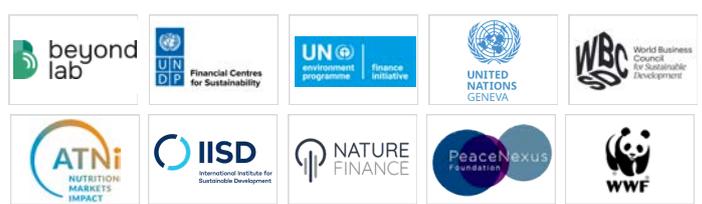
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Founding partners

FINANCE COMMUNITY



INTERNATIONAL GENEVA



PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

