

JUNE, 2020

# THIS IS A.D.U.

WELCOME TO NEW BEGINNINGS...



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Future Forward: New Beginnings...*

ILIMI, the African Development University - A.D.U. was launched in 2017 with the support of volunteers, organizations, and partners such as you from different walks of life and backgrounds. This support is what has kept our doors open to date, and for this, we are eternally grateful. From inception, A.D.U. has experienced priceless moments with volunteers coming from all over the world to share their knowledge and this has contributed in no small measure in helping us to build a thriving university.

As the first not-for-profit and innovative educational institution in the Sahel, our mission is to educate the most promising young people in the region of Sahel to become ethical leaders with the requisite knowledge, skills, and commitment to create the future of their nations, and this has remained our driving force and guiding light at all times.

While we face unique challenges in which the world is currently coping with adjusting to the "new normal" and to the realities of the current global health challenges and disruption that we all face, as a learning institution, A.D.U. is poised to remain at the forefront of providing platforms and opportunities for young people across the Sahel to access quality education as well as serve as the change makers and solution providers that the world needs this moment and beyond. Welcome to A.D.U. and welcome to New Beginnings.



# 2020: A BRAND NEW CAMPUS



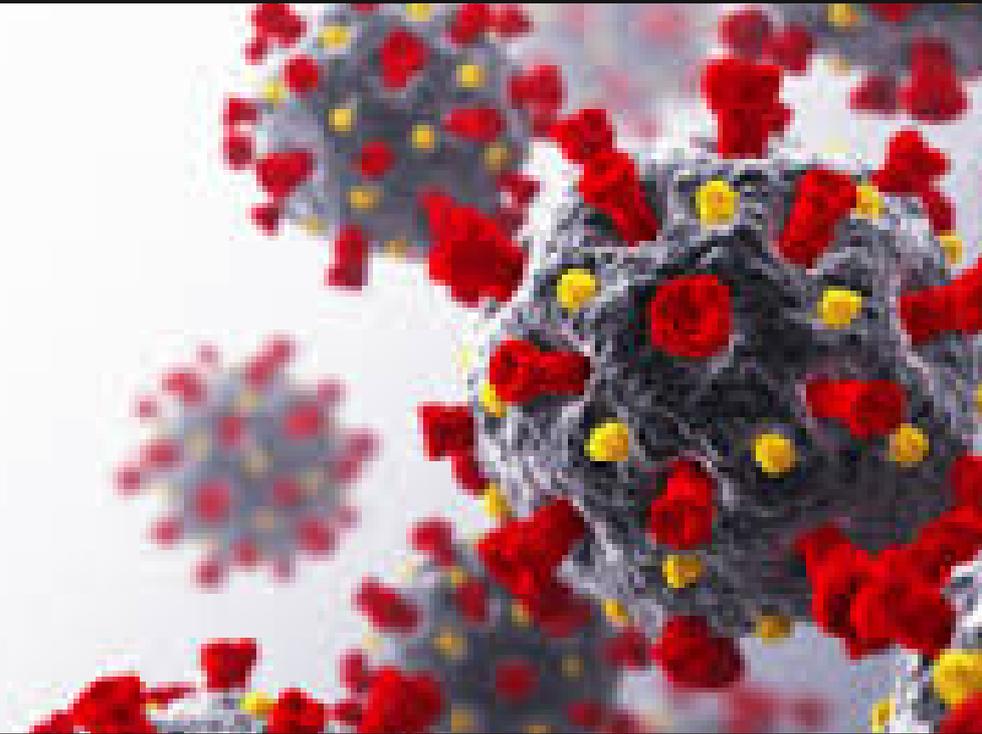
## **A fresh new start...**

The year 2020 marked the beginning of a new chapter for A.D.U., as we moved to our brand-new campus in Niamey. This is one of our biggest milestones for the year and we could not have achieved this without the continued support of exceptional friends such as you. Therefore, at this point, we will like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to partners such as MasterCard Foundation and Ashesi University, who were both instrumental in providing us with the right mentorship, support, and resources to make this big, bold and audacious move.

Our relocation was quite an adventure – a team from Ashesi University led by Rose A. Dodd visited our university to support our curriculum development efforts and within a week, Rose took leadership and championed our relocation efforts by delivering an almost impossible mission, which saw us moving out of our old campus and starting classes the next Monday on the brand new Campus, all within one week. Of course, while things were far from perfect, the move, however, mobilized our community together with such a force, energy and spirit that we felt at the initial days of starting A.D.U., where we had a strong conviction that impossible was nothing.



# COVID-19



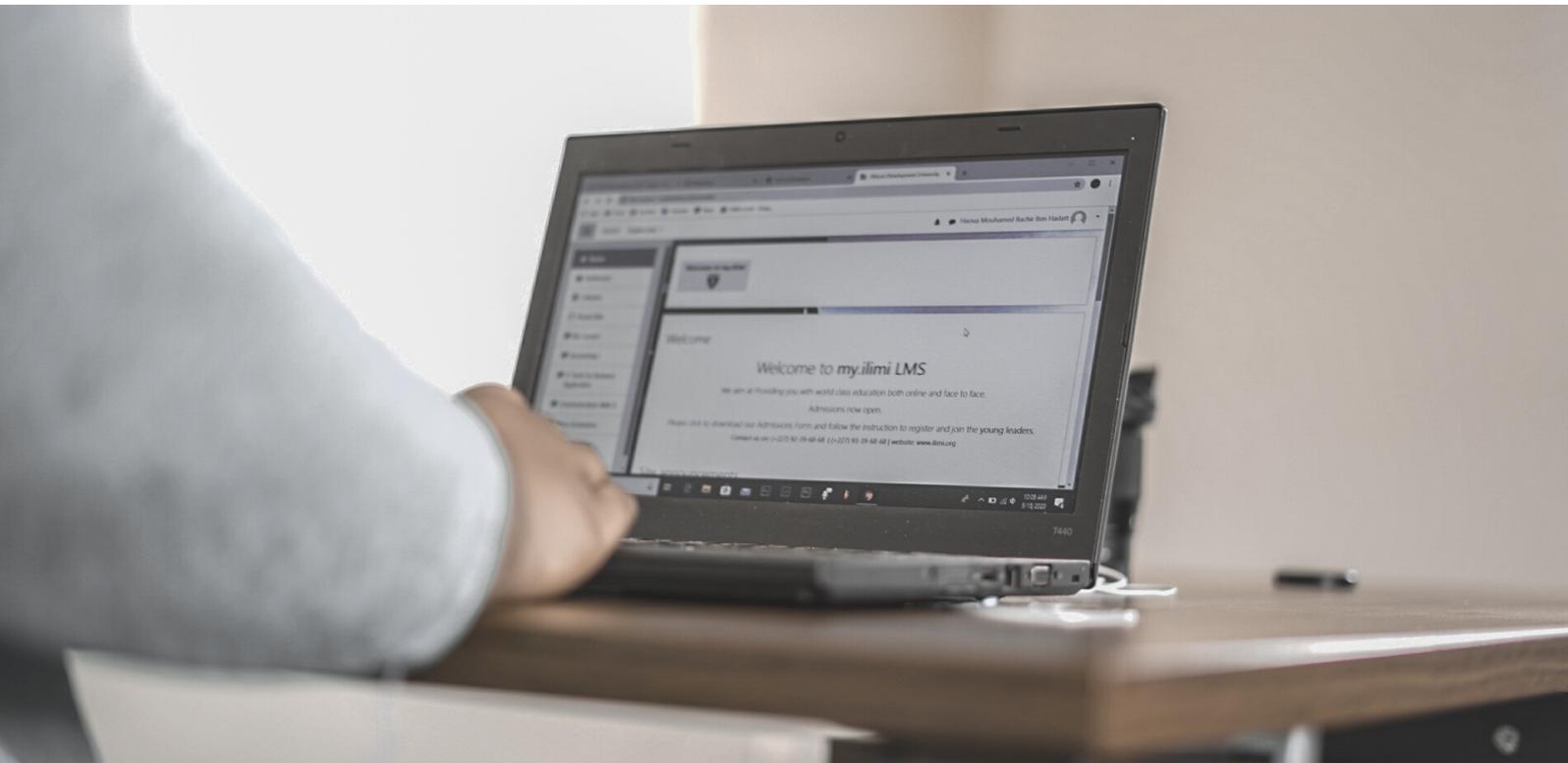
## MANAGING THE GLOBAL HEALTH CRISES AND DISRUPTION CAUSED BY COVID-19

2020 started as a year where we hoped to consolidate on our efforts over the years in building a university that the students and community that we serve truly deserve. However, the world was hit with the novel coronavirus in the early part of the year which practically put the entire world at a stand-still, and as such, all earlier planned growth activities were either postponed indefinitely or canceled outrightly.

The financial impact of COVID-19 might truly not be fully known in its full ramifications; however, this presented a challenging phase for us as a university. Within a few weeks of moving to our new building and commencing learning activities, the government of Niger issued a directive, instructing all schools in the country to close as a means of curtailing the spread of the coronavirus, and we had to comply.

# MY.ILIMI

*Online Learning Management System of African Development University, A.D.U.*



## ONLINE LEARNING

As a forward-thinking learning institution, we had fortunately anticipated the outcome of the COVID-19 situation on learning with close monitoring of the Ashesi University situation, and with their help, we moved our courses online, and learning continued to take place via Zoom. Also, before COVID-19, A.D.U. was already working on building an online learning platform that would provide an experiential and blended learning experience for our students.

We saw this online learning platform as a priority and immediately mobilized a team to work on this right from the beginning of the year, therefore, when COVID-19 struck, we immediately activated our online learning management system – my.ilimi and as such, A.D.U became the only institution that transitioned its students to online learning in less than a week because we had already prepared ahead.

*Due to our state of preparedness, A.D.U. was the only academic institution in Niger, and perhaps across the Sahel that immediately transitioned its students online, thereby minimizing the disruption to learning caused by the novel coronavirus.*

# KNOWLEDGE SHARING

## Sharing best practices with government, partners, and other key stakeholders in the education space...

Transitioning our students at A.D.U. online got the attention of stakeholders within the education sector in Niger, as well as the Ministry of Education and other important government officials, and leveraging on the insights we had gathered, we offered to assist the Ministry of Higher Education and all the public and private institutions with contingency plans in transitioning to online learning. Also, this brought about the following growth opportunities for us as a community, and led to the following:

- Led a meeting comprising leaders of educational institutions in Niger to support and provide them with the blueprint and information to implement an online learning management system in their institutions.
- Increased our influence in the Ministry of Education as we became a thought leader within the post-COVID-19 phase of supporting the government with the process of ensuring learning continues to take place safely and by transitioning students online.



# ONLINE LEARNING: OUR NEW REALITY

## Challenges and Opportunities

For us at A.D.U., COVID-19 came as a blessing in disguise as it has opened up immense opportunities for us to explore, however, these opportunities have also come with great challenges and which we'll highlight a few of them.

- **IT Infrastructure** – transitioning our students online requires a robust IT infrastructure including functional servers, supporting the smooth running and continuous hosting of our learning management system, as well as having access to functional internet access has remained a pain-point which we are facing at A.D.U.
- **Equity and Access-Challenge** – we are currently facing an equity and access challenge where the COVID-19 situation has affected students disproportionately, in the sense that students who do not have access to computers are unable to continue their learning.
- **Mindset Challenge** – since our students are learning from home, we have noticed that there's no incentive to pay fees since there's a perception to parents and guardians that not much learning is taking place while at home, thereby leading to a huge loss of revenue for us. Also, parents and guardians have faced job loss and the economic impact of COVID-19 and this has also affected their ability to pay.



# MOVING AHEAD: STRONG

## COPING IN THE MIDST OF ADVERSITY...

As the world copes with the challenges that we face today and as we all adapt to “the new normal” we believe as a community that “new beginnings” for us present both a challenge and an opportunity where we believe that society can come out of this better and stronger.

Just like the fire incident of May 2019 that we experienced at A.D.U., we are once again reminded of the spirit of resilience that enables us to get up stronger after every challenge, even when it seems impossible or insurmountable. In these exceptional times, here's to a new beginning with a new mindset and a renewed energy and sense of hope.

To all of you, we hereby express our infinite gratitude for making A.D.U. the dream university for a whole generation and we look forward to welcoming you to our new and improved campus, after Covid-19.



# THE A.D.U. EXPERIENCE

## iiLAB

ILIMI Innovation Lab provides the creative space where students are able to work on, collaborate as well as test out their creative and innovative ideas. At iiLAB, the sky is just the starting point.



## A.D.U. Life n Lead

Developing the head, heart and minds of our students remain top priority at A.D.U., and through active engagement in sporting and club activities, we aim to create an engaging student experience.



## A.D.U. Enterprise

Our Non-Academic Affairs office creates school to work career pathways for our students, thereby making them ready for the workplace through guided internships, work placements and other entrepreneurial activities that they engage in.

