

## **PS 2.1**

**REDUCING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: HOW TO ENSURE AN ENABLING  
ENVIRONMENT FOR EQUITABLE TECH FOR ALL**

## | BACKGROUND

AI and other innovative technologies are increasingly integrated into the fabric of society, including healthcare, finance, education, and law enforcement. If these systems are not developed and deployed with equity in mind, they risk being used by only by elites in societies and/or perpetuating and even exacerbating existing biases and inequalities. Those who could benefit most from digital health tools and interventions, like persons from low socio-economic strata, vulnerable or marginalized communities, older adults, people with disabilities, and those from rural communities, are often the ones with limited or no digital literacy. By ensuring equity in health technologies, we can mitigate these risks and even promote fairer, more just outcomes across different sectors of society.

Moreover, an equitable environment fosters trust and acceptance among diverse populations. By addressing the needs and concerns of marginalized communities and including them in technology development for their benefit, we can create systems that are more relevant and beneficial to a wider audience.

Thus, there is both promise and worry ahead as the use of health technologies spreads throughout the world. For example, in developing countries, where rural areas grapple with severe shortages of skilled healthcare providers, health technology holds transformative potential. It not only amplifies remote access to physicians and healthcare services but also presents a cost-effective and equitable solution. Adoption of technologies by vulnerable populations also significantly increase and democratize access to new capabilities and expertise. But this will only come if we purposively make it happen. Currently, the digital divide is wide and highly prejudiced. UNICEF estimates that only one in 20 school-age children from low-income countries has internet access at home, while nearly nine in ten from high-income countries do.[1] We must bridge these divides by providing the necessary infrastructure, education, and resources to ensure that benefits are widely distributed.

[1] How many children and young people have internet access at home? Estimating digital connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic". UNICEF, 2020.

## | OBJECTIVES

The objective of this session is to present and examine global examples of health technologies and biases and disparities in their design/implementation and how experts and communities – always a necessary collaboration - are working together to solve them.



## Panelist

# Rose Delilah Gesicho

*Chair and Data Scientist*

Deep Learning Indaba and Zindi  
Kenya

TITLE: Data Scientist, Community Manager - Zindi

### Short Bio

Rose Delilah Gesicho is a dynamic leader in data science and community engagement, currently serving as a Data Scientist and Community Manager at Zindi, Africa's largest data science network. With a strong foundation in Information Technology and Data Science, Rose has dedicated her career to empowering individuals and communities across Africa in the realm of emerging technologies.

Her career trajectory is marked by significant contributions, including her role as a Data Science Technical Trainer at Moringa School in Nairobi, Kenya, where she guided aspiring data professionals in building their technical skills. As the Community Chair for Deep Learning Indaba, she plays a pivotal role in uniting AI communities across Africa, fostering collaboration, and advancing the practice of AI on the continent.

At Zindi, Rose leads a team of over 200 ambassadors across more than 30 countries, nurturing vibrant AI communities that are actively building innovative solutions. Under her leadership, Zindi has become a key player in developing a thriving AI ecosystem in Africa. Her efforts extend to moderating and speaking at conferences, advocating for the transformative power of data science to drive innovation and organizational growth. She has spearheaded partnerships with global corporations, including Microsoft, and played a key role in promoting Responsible AI practices across major African markets like Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria.

Beyond her work at Zindi, Rose also contributes as a Learning Program Manager at Alliance4ai and creates content that highlights the importance of AI for the future of work. As a member of the UNESCO expert network for Women for Ethical AI, she works to develop frameworks that promote inclusivity and ethical practices in AI.

Rose's tireless commitment to equipping Africa's youth with the knowledge and skills to thrive in data science positions her as a trailblazer in Africa's tech ecosystem. Her vision and leadership continue to shape the global landscape of data science and emerging technologies, making her a key figure in advancing innovation and empowerment across the continent.