

APO founder talks about his meteoric media journey

DAKAR, Senegal - APO Group founder and chairman, Nicolas Pompigne-Mognard, spoke about his rise from journalist to entrepreneur - and the value of the African media industry in shaping economic development across the continent, to journalism students in Dakar, Senegal.



Nicolas Pompigne-Mognard, APO founder & chairman, addresses journalism students in Senegal.

Pompigne-Mognard spoke this week at the Centre d' Etudes des Sciences et Techniques de l'Information (CESTI) in Dakar, Senegal, which is the leading school for journalism in Francophone Africa.

The prestigious college, which was created in 1965 with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is a cooperative of the University of Dakar and welcomes students from a dozen countries in French-speaking Africa.

CESTI invited Pompigne-Mognard to speak to their journalism students about the influence of the local media industry and the importance of their work on a global scale.

According to UNESCO, the most promising journalism education institutions in Africa are being supported to become centres of excellence by improving staff training, curricula, learning materials, media resource centres, networks and management skills. This builds better communication in all fields and helps students make the right choices and better understand major social, cultural, economic and political issues.

Media market

The talk also covered entrepreneurship, current affairs and Francophone Africa's position in the international media market. The question and answer session demonstrated the excitement and eagerness of both the students and Pompigne-Mognard to engage in lively discussion and learn from each other. The self-made entrepreneur shared his experiences achieving success in their chosen field and opened the floor to hear about the group's ideas and challenges.

"We were delighted to have Nicolas speak to the students yesterday," said Prof Mamadou Ndiaye, director of studies at CESTI. "It was a fantastic opportunity to learn from someone who has achieved so much in the field and one could see the great amount of enthusiasm and passion he still has for this industry. Our students were clearly inspired which is why it is so important to integrate real-life experience and invite working experts into our curriculum."



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Speaking to the students, Pompigne-Mognard quoted a recent McKinsey study which said: "Africa is poised for economic acceleration akin to the Asian boom'. There are now hundreds of international corporations who have been operating throughout Africa for several years. Today, most of them are planning their expansion across the continent to get their chunk of this huge untapped market.

Media spend

"Not only are international companies expanding in the region, but there are currently 400 African companies with a revenue of 1 billion US dollars," said Pompigne-Mognard. "This will obviously translate into more media relations spending, especially if you consider a growing trend where communicators are re-evaluating their mix of advertising versus PR.

"It's important for these students to know that now is a great time to pursue their passion in communications - and that they will be vital players in the growth of the continent. I am honoured to have been chosen to talk to this group of communications scholars as I cannot think of a more fulfilling experience than to be in a position to share the knowledge I have learned throughout my career, with young, talented and ambitious students who truly want to make a difference in this field."

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