



# The **100 most influential** African athletes on Twitter

/// Study conducted on February 3, 2021 by SMART DATA **POWER**

# /// What is the purpose of this study?

## Sports, at the center of development in Africa

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Sports represents 2% of global GDP and 0.5% of African GDP. It has always been a major impetus for development. On a continuously buzzing continent such as Africa, it embodies indisputable dynamics, source of rallying and cohesion.

## The status of African athletes on Twitter

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This top-100 proposes a ranking of sportspeople of African nationality who do their job in Africa or elsewhere, while getting things moving on the continent on a daily basis. It does not pretend to be exhaustive, it is a snapshot at time T of those figures depending on their Twitter influence, which is defined by the size of their community but also the substance of their message.

## Why Twitter?

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As a social media and expression channel, Twitter enables access to numerous data, in an open and legal way. This accessibility makes Twitter a premium source for this study. Discover from our detection efforts, who they are, where they come from and what they are doing.

# **/// A methodology in 4 steps**

**GDPR  
COMPLIANT**

## **BIG DATA**

Data collection via Twitter Premium API



## **OPEN DATA**

Enrichment of data thanks to Open Data  
(geographic, economic, sanitary...)

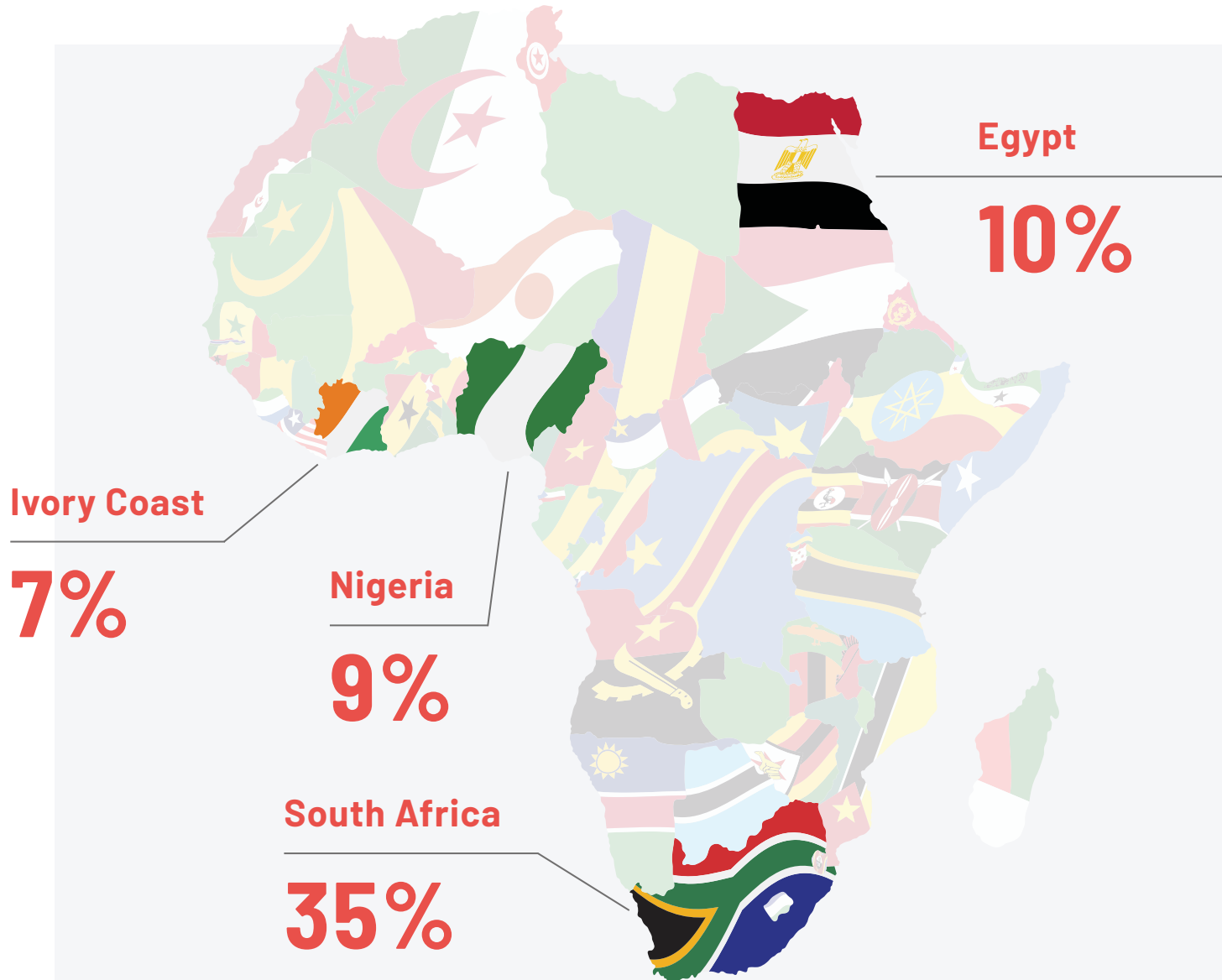
## **SMART DATA**

Refining and treatment of data via our algorithms

## **SMART DATA POWER**

Cross-check with human intelligence for reliable, exploitable and unique data

## 21 countries represented in TOP 100



Kenya	6%
Cameroon	5%
Algeria	4%
Senegal	4%
DRC	3%
Tanzania	2%
Zimbabwe	2%
Mali	2%
Angola	2%
Ghana	2%
Other countries	1%

## /// Distribution by sports



Football

56%



Cricket

12%



Rugby

10%



Basketball

9%



Athletics

8%



Swimming

2%



Golf

1%



Tennis

1%



Boxing

1%

# TOP 10 most influential by number of followers

1



**Mohamed Salah**  
@MoSalah - 13.8 M

Football



Egypt

2



**AB de Villiers**  
@ABdeVilliers17 - 7.4 M

Cricket



South Africa

3



**Mohamed Elneny**  
@EINennY - 4.7 M

Football



Egypt

4



**Ahmed Elmohamady**  
@Elmo\_27 - 2.5 M

Football



Egypt

5



**Riyad Mahrez**  
@Mahrez22 - 2.4 M

Football



Algeria

6



**Essam el-Hadary**  
@ELHadary - 2.2 M

Football



Egypt

7



**Didier Drogba**  
@didierdrogba - 2.1 M

Football



Ivory Coast

8



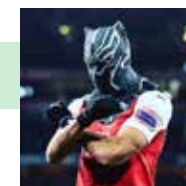
**Joël Embiid**  
@JoelEmbiid - 1.8 M

Basketball



Cameroon

9



**Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang**  
@Aubameyang7 - 1.7 M

Football



Gabon

10























**Saleh Gomaa**  
@SalehGomaa - 1.5 M

Football























Egypt

# From 11<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> rankings


























11	<b>Samuel Eto'o</b>	@setoo9	1.5 M	Football	Cameroon	
12	<b>Giannis Ugo Antetokounmpo</b>	@Giannis_An34	1.4 M	Basketball	Nigeria	
13	<b>Mohamed el Shenawy</b>	@Melshenawy	1.4 M	Football	Egypt	
14	<b>Islam Slimani</b>	@slimaniislam	1.4 M	Football	Algeria	
15	<b>Demba Ba</b>	@dembabafoot	1.3 M	Football	Senegal	
16	<b>Sofiane Feghouli</b>	@sffeghouli	1.3 M	Football	Algeria	
17	<b>JP Duminy</b>	@jpduminy21	1.3 M	Cricket	South Africa	
18	<b>André Iguodala</b>	@andre	1.3 M	Basketball	Nigeria	
19	<b>Eric Bailly</b>	@ericbailly24	1.3 M	Football	Ivory Coast	
20	<b>Victor Moses</b>	@VictorMoses	1.1 M	Football	Nigeria	
21	<b>Albie Morkel</b>	@albiemorkel	1.1 M	Cricket	South Africa	
22	<b>Ayman Ashraf</b>	@aymanashraf	1.1 M	Football	Egypt	
23	<b>David Miller</b>	@DavidMillerSA12	1 M	Cricket	South Africa	
24	<b>Marwan Mohsen</b>	@MMohsen	1 M	Football	Egypt	
25	<b>Serge Ibaka</b>	@sergeibaka	927.5 K	Basketball	Congo Brazzaville	
26	<b>Wilfried Zaha</b>	@wilfriedzaha	922 K	Football	Ivory Coast	
27	<b>Assamoah Gyan</b>	@ASAMOAH_GYAN3	883.3 K	Football	Ghana	
28	<b>Alexander Iwobi</b>	@alexiwobi	833.1 K	Football	Nigeria	
29	<b>Odion Jude Ighalo</b>	@ighalojude	810.9 K	Football	Nigeria	
30	<b>Yaya Touré</b>	@YayaToure	789 K	Football	Ivory Coast	

# From 31<sup>st</sup> to 50<sup>th</sup> rankings

























31	<b>Michael Essien</b>	@MichaelEssien	686.4 K	Football	Ghana	
32	<b>Rio Mavuba</b>	@riomavuba	618.9 K	Football	Angola	
33	<b>Percy Tau</b>	@percymuzitau22	451.2 K	Football	South Africa	
34	<b>Gervais Yao Kouassi</b>	@GervinhOfficial	414.1 K	Football	Ivory Coast	
35	<b>Caster Semenya</b>	@caster800m	402.8 K	Athletics	South Africa	
36	<b>Eliud Kipchoge</b>	@EliudKipchoge	397.5 K	Athletics	Kenya	
37	<b>David Rudisha</b>	@rudishadavid	392.6 K	Athletics	Kenya	
38	<b>Kalidou Koulibaly</b>	@kkoulibaly26	368.3 K	Football	Senegal	
39	<b>Francis Ngannou</b>	@francis_ngannou	354.7 K	Boxing	Cameroon	
40	<b>Aurelien Chedjou</b>	@AurelienChedjou	342.4 K	Football	Cameroon	
41	<b>Wayne Parnell</b>	@WayneParnell	340.6 K	Cricket	South Africa	
42	<b>Victor Oladipo</b>	@VicOladipo	309 K	Basketball	Sierra Leone	
43	<b>Bongani Zungu</b>	@BonganiZungu08	271.6 K	Football	South Africa	
44	<b>Siphiwe Tshabalala</b>	@siphieweshabba	259.8 K	Football	South Africa	
45	<b>Salomon Kalou</b>	@salomonkalou	257.1 K	Football	Ivory Coast	
46	<b>Chad Le Clos</b>	@chadleclos	253.7 K	Swimming	South Africa	
47	<b>Ramy Bensebaini</b>	@bensebainiRams	246.5 K	Football	Algeria	
48	<b>Frédéric Oumar Kanouté</b>	@FredericKanoute	241 K	Football	Mali	
49	<b>Khama Billiat</b>	@khama_Billiat11	225.3 K	Football	Zimbabwe	
50	<b>Vernon Philander</b>	@VDP_24	218.9 K	Cricket	South Africa	



# From 51<sup>st</sup> to 75<sup>th</sup> rankings

51	<b>Asisat Oshoala</b>	@AsisatOshoala	213 K	Football	Nigeria	
52	<b>Daine Klate</b>	@Klatey7	203 K	Football	South Africa	
53	<b>Kermit Romeo Erasmus</b>	@Erasmus_95	194.6 K	Football	South Africa	
54	<b>Cédric Bakambu</b>	@Bakambu17	182.7 K	Football	DRC	
55	<b>Mbwana Samatta</b>	@Samagoal_77	133 K	Football	Tanzania	
56	<b>Ernie Els</b>	@TheBig_Easy	128.9 K	Golf	South Africa	
57	<b>Wayde van Niekerk</b>	@WaydeDreamer	127.6 K	Athletics	South Africa	
58	<b>Brendan Taylor</b>	@BrendanTaylor86	126.5 K	Cricket	Zimbabwe	
59	<b>Robin John Peterson</b>	@robbie13flair	106.3 K	Cricket	South Africa	
60	<b>Lungi Ngidi</b>	@NgidiLungi	106.3 K	Cricket	South Africa	
61	<b>Taher Mohamed Taher</b>	@Taherr7	104.4 K	Football	Egypt	
62	<b>Stephane Mbia</b>	@StephaneMbia	82.3 K	Football	Cameroon	
63	<b>Willie le roux</b>	@wjlleroux	72.3 K	Rugby	South Africa	
64	<b>Jackson Mabokgwane</b>	@JMabokgwane	67.5 K	Football	South Africa	
65	<b>Sadio Mané</b>	@SadioMane10FP	67.2 K	Football	Senegal	
66	<b>Gorgui Dieng</b>	@GorguiDieng	61.4 K	Basketball	Senegal	
67	<b>Kyle Abbott</b>	@Kyle_Abbott87	60.4 K	Cricket	South Africa	
68	<b>Eduardo Camavinga</b>	@Camavinga	59.6 K	Football	Angola	
69	<b>Cheslin Kolbe</b>	@Cheslin_Kolbe11	57.2 K	Rugby	South Africa	
70	<b>David Wiese</b>	@David_Wiese	56.6 K	Cricket	South Africa	
71	<b>Himid Mao</b>	@HimidMao	56.2 K	Football	Tanzania	
72	<b>Farida Osman</b>	@FaridaOsman	55 K	Swimming	Egypt	
73	<b>Shehu Abdullahi</b>	@OfficialShehu	53.8 K	Football	Nigeria	
74	<b>Cobus Reinach</b>	@c_reinach	53.7 K	Rugby	South Africa	
75	<b>Bismack Biyombo</b>	@bismackbiyombo	53.6 K	Basketball	DRC	

# From 76<sup>th</sup> to 100<sup>th</sup> rankings

76	Janine Van Wyk	@Janinevanwyk5	52.3 K	Football	South Africa	
77	Derick Hougaard	@DerickHougaard	48.9 K	Rugby	South Africa	
78	Amanda toki Dlamini	@Amanda_Dlamini9	42.3 K	Football	South Africa	
79	Siya Kolisi	@SiyaKolisi_Bear	41.3 K	Rugby	South Africa	
80	Tabraiz Shamsi	@shamsi90	40.2 K	Cricket	South Africa	
81	Akani Simbine	@AkaniSimbine	39.8 K	Athletics	South Africa	
82	Faf de klerk	@fafdeklerk	38.3 K	Rugby	South Africa	
83	Julius Yego	@JuliusYegoKE	34 K	Athletics	Kenya	
84	Joshua Cheptegei	@joshuacheptege1	32.9 K	Athletics	Uganda	
85	Ons Jabeur	@Ons_Jabeur	31.9 K	Tennis	Tunisia	
86	Christian Eyenga	@christeyenga31	30.6 K	Basketball	DRC	
87	Humphrey Kayange	@HKayangeOGW	26.4 K	Rugby	Kenya	
88	Jacques Burger	@Nabasboer	25.6 K	Rugby	Namibia	
89	Dennis Ombachi	@ombachi13	23.9 K	Rugby	Kenya	
90	Refiloe Jane	@fifinhojane	23.8 K	Football	South Africa	
91	Francisca Ordega	@OrdegaF	23.8 K	Football	Nigeria	
92	Sand Alwarfali	@Sand_Alwarfali	22 K	Football	Morocco	
93	Souleymane Coulibaly	@Sol_Coulibaly	21.8 K	Football	Ivory Coast	
94	Kgatlana Thembi	@Kgatlanathe1st	20.9 K	Football	South Africa	
95	Jermaine Seoposenwe	@jermaine109	20.1 K	Football	South Africa	
96	Teboho Mohoje	@OupsMo	19.8 K	Rugby	South Africa	
97	Asbel Kiprop	@KipropAsbel	19.1 K	Athletics	Kenya	
98	Simphiwe Dlodlu	@Simphiwe_Dlodlu	19 K	Football	South Africa	
99	Cheick Diallo	@cheick_diallo13	17 K	Basketball	Mali	
100	Onome Ebi	@EBIONOME	16.8 K	Football	Nigeria	

**/// To go further...**



# TOP 10 Sportswomen

1



**Caster Semenya**  
@caster800m - **402.8 K**  
**Athletics**  
South Africa

2



**Asisat Oshoala**  
@AsisatOshoala - **213 K**  
**Football**  
Nigeria

3



**Farida Osman**  
@FaridaOsman - **55 K**  
**Swimming**  
Egypt

4



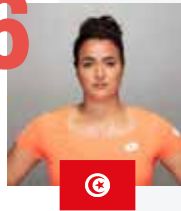
**Janine Van Wyk**  
@Janinevanwyk5 - **52.3 K**  
**Football**  
South Africa

5



**Amanda toki Dlamini**  
@Amanda\_Dlamini9 - **42.3 K**  
**Football**  
South Africa

6



**Ons Jabeur**  
@Ons\_Jabeur - **31.9 K**  
**Tennis**  
Tunisia

7



**Refiloe Jane**  
@fifinhojane - **23.8 K**  
**Football**  
South Africa

8



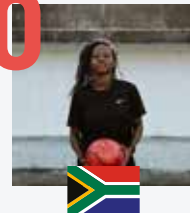
**Francisca Ordega**  
@OrdegaF - **23.8 K**  
**Football**  
Nigeria

9



**Kgatlane Thembi**  
@Kgatlanathe1st - **20.9 K**  
**Football**  
South Africa

10



**Jermaine Seoposenwe**  
@jermaine109 - **20.1 K**  
**Football**  
South Africa

# TOP 10 Non Footballers



**AB de Villiers**  
@ABdeVilliers17 - **7.4 M**  
**Cricket**  
South Africa



**Joël Embiid**  
@JoelEmbiid - **1.8 M**  
**Basketball**  
Cameroon



**Giannis Ugo Antetokounmpou**  
@Giannis\_An34 - **1.4 M**  
**Basketball**  
Nigeria



**JP Duminy**  
@jpduminy21 - **1.3 M**  
**Cricket**  
South Africa



**André Iguodala**  
@andre - **1.3 M**  
**Basketball**  
Nigeria



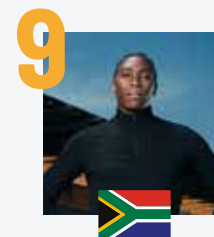
**Albie Morkel**  
@albiemorkel - **1.1 M**  
**Cricket**  
South Africa



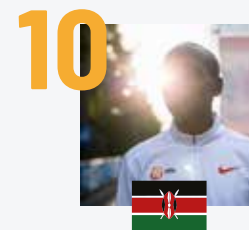
**David Miller**  
@DavidMillerSA12 - **1 M**  
**Cricket**  
South Africa



**Serge Ibaka**  
@sergeibaka - **927.5 K**  
**Basketball**  
Congo Brazzaville



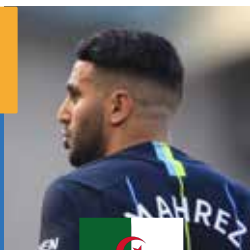
**Caster Semenya**  
@caster800m - **402.8 K**  
**Athletics**  
South Africa



**Eliud Kipchoge**  
@EliudKipchoge - **397.5 K**  
**Athletics**  
Kenya

# TOP 10 Sportsmen from French-speaking countries

1



**Riyad Mahrez**

@Mahrez22 - 2.4 M

**Football**

Algeria

2



**Didier Drogba**

@didierdrogba - 2.1 M

**Football**

Ivory Coast

3



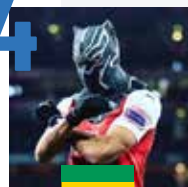
**Joël Embiid**

@JoelEmbiid - 1.8 M

**Basketball**

Cameroon

4



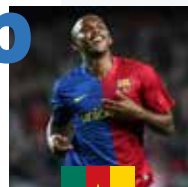
**Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang**

@Aubameyang7 - 1.7 M

**Football**

Gabon

5



**Samuel Eto'o**

@setoo9 - 1.5 M

**Football**

Cameroon

6



**Islam Slimani**

@slimaniislam - 1.4 M

**Football**

Algeria

7



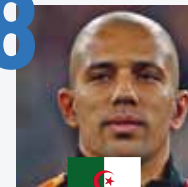
**Demba Ba**

@dembabafoot - 1.3 M

**Football**

Senegal

8



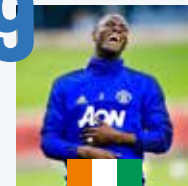
**Sofiane Feghouli**

@sffeghouli - 1.3 M

**Football**

Algeria

9



**Eric Baily**

@ericbailly24 - 1.3 M

**Football**

Ivory Coast

10



**Serge Ibaka**

@sergeibaka - 927.5 K

**Basketball**

Congo Brazzaville

# TOP 10 Sportsmen from non French-speaking countries



**Mohamed Salah**  
@MoSalah - **13.8 M**  
**Football**  
Egypt



**AB de Villiers**  
@ABdeVilliers17 - **7.4 M**  
**Cricket**  
South Africa



**Mohamed Elneny**  
@EINenny - **4.7 M**  
**Football**  
Egypt



**Ahmed Elmohamady**  
@Elmo\_27 - **2.5 M**  
**Football**  
Egypt



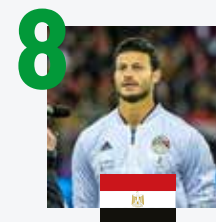
**Essam el-Hadary**  
@ELHadary - **2.2 M**  
**Football**  
Egypt



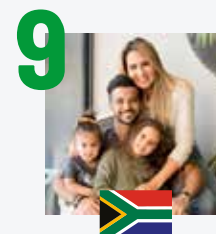
**Saleh Gomaa**  
@SalehGomaa - **1.5 M**  
**Football**  
Egypt



**Giannis Ugo Antetokounmpo**  
@Giannis\_An34 - **1.4 M**  
**Basketball**  
Nigeria



**Mohamed el Shenawy**  
@Melshenawy - **1.4 M**  
**Football**  
Egypt



**JP Duminy**  
@jpduminy21 - **1.3 M**  
**Cricket**  
South Africa



**André Iguodala**  
@andre - **1.3 M**  
**Basketball**  
Nigeria

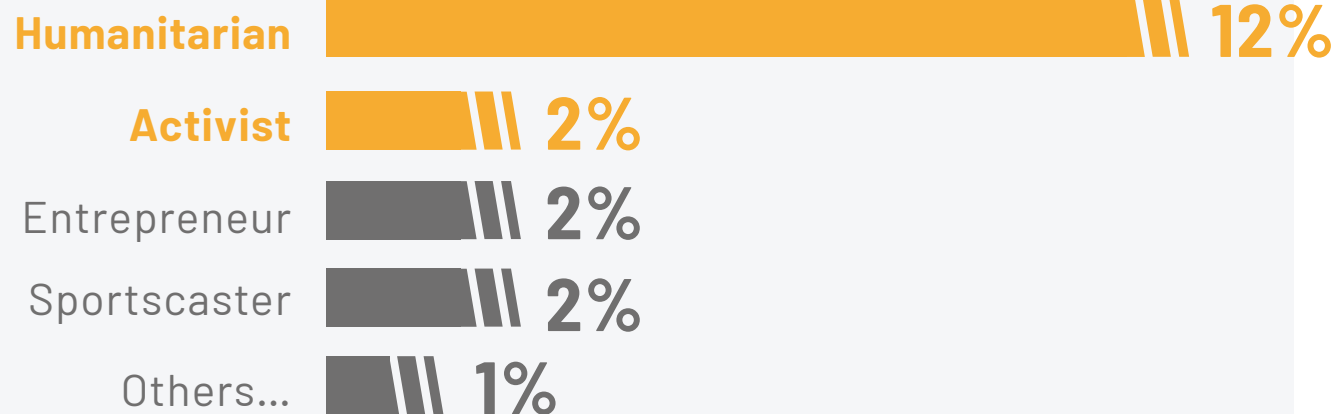
**/// Focus on socially and politically committed athletes**





## /// Distribution of committed athletes

Among the sportsmen in our ranking,  
21% have developed a side activity



14% of them are activists or committed to a humanitarian, social or environmental cause.

# 72%

of committed athletes  
are between **30 and 40**  
years old



Committed athletes are most often at the top of their careers or have recently retired from sports competitions.

# /// Athletes' names and associated causes

**Demba Ba**  
@dembabafoot

Fight against  
racism



Participates in funding the Collective against Islamophobia in France (CCIF) and the Panafricanist Emergencies association

**Gorgui Dieng**  
@GorguiDieng

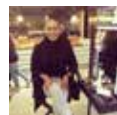
Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Gorgui Dieng Foundation in 2015 for the improvement of health in Senegal  
--> <https://www.gorguidieng.com/>

**Amanda toki Dlamini**  
@Amanda\_Dlamini9

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Amanda Dlamini Foundation in 2012 for the education of young girls in rural areas  
--> <https://www.adgf.org.za/>

**Didier Drogba**  
@didierdrogba

Actions for peace  
and development



Vice President of the international organization Peace and Sports acting for development through sport since 2018  
Created the Didier Drogba Foundation for education and health of young people in Africa in 2007  
--> <https://www.didierdrogbafoundation.org/>

**Michael Essien**  
@MichaelEssien

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Michael Essien Foundation in 2009  
--> <https://www.facebook.com/MichaelEssienFoundation/>

**Samuel Eto'o**  
@setoo9

Actions for peace  
and development



Manages Fundesport project for the social development of youth through sport in Cameroon and Gabon  
Created the Samuel Eto'o Foundation for education and health in Africa, underprivileged or disabled people in 2006  
--> <http://www.samueletoo.fr/fondation-samuel-etoo.php>

**Frédéric Oumar Kanouté**  
@FredericKanoute

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Kanoute Foundation for children in Mali in 2006  
Activist speeches (Palestine, social justice...)  
--> [www.fundacionkanoute.com/fondation-kanoute/](http://www.fundacionkanoute.com/fondation-kanoute/)

**Siya Kolisi**  
@SiyaKolisi\_Bear

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Kolisi Foundation with his wife in 2020, in response to the Covid-19 epidemic in South Africa  
--> <https://kolisifoundation.org/>

**Gervais Yao Kouassi**  
@GervinhOfficial

Actions for peace  
and development



UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador

## Jackson Mabokgwane

@JMabokgwane

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Jackson Mabokgwane Foundation for the development of South African communities

--> [www.jacksonmabokgwanefoundation.co.za](http://www.jacksonmabokgwanefoundation.co.za)

## Francis Ngannou

@francis\_ngannou

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Francis Ngannou Foundation for children in Cameroon

--> <https://www.francisngannoufoundation.org/>

## Lungi Ngidi

@NgidiLungi

Fight against  
racism



Supports the Black Lives Matter movement

Fights against institutional racism in the cricket world

## Yaya Touré

@YayaToure

Animal  
protection



Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations environmental program

Particularly engaged in a campaign against elephant poaching

## Julius Yego

@JuliusYegoKE

Actions for peace  
and development



Created the Julius Yego association committed to Internet learning for children in Kenya