



Firoz Lalji Institute Report
2022



Firoz Lalji Institute
for Africa



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1 ■ INTRODUCTION

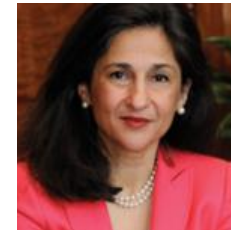
The transition from Centre to Institute

“ In the past year, the Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa has become the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa. That is a big step towards taking Africa to the heart of LSE, which is one of our key objectives. We have also continued to be successful in terms of winning new research grants, publishing, teaching, and - where appropriate - influencing policy. New colleagues have joined us, and there are a host of new initiatives. Even in its first year, a period affected by COVID-19, the FLIA has been growing and is set to expand further, not least on the African continent, where our hundreds of alumni from our Programme for African Leadership are playing an increasingly important role, and our long-standing collaborations with African scholars and African universities are becoming ever stronger partnerships. ”



Professor Tim Allen
Director of the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa

“ The tremendous growth of the Firoz Lalji Institute takes forward LSE’s long history of engagement with Africa and African issues. Quickly building a reputation for research excellence and leadership development globally, the Institute continues to launch new projects and host world-renowned speakers, while fostering an inclusive, dedicated community on campus and online. In this exciting next phase, these commitments will be taken further, with the Institute showing how robust thought can make positive real-world differences to issues of development, humanitarianism, and justice in Africa. ”



Baroness Minouche Shafik
LSE Director

“ The transition from a Centre into an Institute demonstrates LSE’s ongoing commitment to placing Africa at the heart of global debates. Bringing together the School’s African community, and those researching and teaching on the continent, the Institute is always building new connections and, through the Programme for African Leadership, driving an expanding network of African alumni. Dedicated to promoting inclusive debate and sustainable futures, both inside and outside LSE, this is an exciting stage in the Institute’s development. ”



Firoz Lalji
(BSc Economics, 1969)

LSE, Africa, and colonialism

Established four years before the outbreak of the Boer War in South Africa, LSE was rapidly caught up in the debates of the time. The Fabians who founded LSE viewed the fighting in South Africa as an inevitable consequence of imperialism, but they did not propose the dissolving of the British Empire.

On the contrary, they argued that it should be used for the establishment of a socialist commonwealth. One of them, Sidney Webb, even served as Secretary of State for the Colonies between 1929 and 1931. Nevertheless, the emphasis on addressing matters of inequality at LSE was associated with anticolonial views among many staff and students.

From the 1930s, seven post-independence African Heads of State studied at the School, including Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah and, in 1957, LSE students were among the first to protest the Apartheid regime in South Africa. In the 2000s, LSE became a frequent destination for notable African leaders, including Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan. Years of continued engagement with African students, scholars, and organisations led to the launch, by Professor Thandika Mkandawire, of the LSE Africa Initiative in 2009. **Today, the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa continues this important legacy.**





Photo: Publication - Pexels.com

Our research

Research at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA) is wide-ranging and generates insights into governance and public authority, digital innovations, health-seeking strategies, humanitarian action, community resilience, pandemic preparedness, and the localisation of aid and development. Published in a variety of forms, our research produces new knowledge for

academics, policymakers, students, and civil society leaders, guiding policy responses to the displacement of refugees, COVID-19, trade negotiations, and the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Expanding every year, our research projects are multidisciplinary and engage new partners across the African continent, building on collaborative work with researchers and institutions in Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sierra Leone.

New initiatives are also underway to broaden the scope of our programme. These include investigations into the study of children and youth, alternative democratic systems, and the environment and climate change, as well as field research beyond East and Central Africa and comparative work with other continents.

A collaborative approach to publications

Special issues and co-authored papers

Working in different places across the world, many of the researchers working in our ESRC-funded research centre, the Centre for Public Authority and

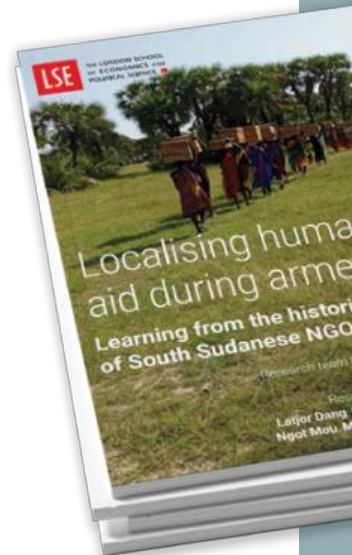
International Development (CPAID), have been doing long-term fieldwork in collaboration with each other for a decade or more. During this time, the Centre has facilitated systematic exchanges of ideas employing a public authority lens. This approach has been applied to research outputs, with numerous multi-authored journal articles, working papers, and blogs [published](#) based on collaborative, community-engaged long-term fieldwork.

Four themed special issue journal publications showcase the breadth of work from researchers and partners in Africa, drawing on cross-cutting debates with an expanding international network. Featuring up to 20 CPAID contributors per journal, these issues in the [Journal of Refugee Studies](#), [Nations and Nationalism](#), [Political Geography](#), and the [Journal of Eastern African Studies](#) have addressed, respectively, the complex dynamics of displacement and 'return' in Central and East Africa, self-determination in the Horn of Africa, conservation in violent environments, understandings of customary authority in development interventions, and everyday realities of UN protection of civilians.

Book projects

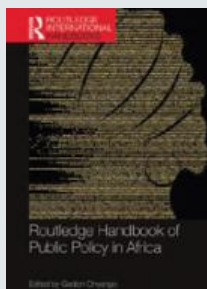
Since the Firoz Lalji Centre (now Institute) was launched in 2016, eight monographs and edited collections by our researchers have explored issues of public authority in diverse contexts across Africa. Topics range from [sexual violence and post-conflict reconstruction](#) in Uganda, social control and modern authoritarianism, the life and works of Acholi poet [Okot p'Bitek](#), and a study of the '[Third United Nations](#)', which explores the role of research communities, civil society, and the private sector as underappreciated sources of public authority and global governance.

These book publications include two textbooks: a Routledge guide to humanitarianism and an Oxford University Press publication on [poverty and development](#) in the 21st century. These contain



chapter contributions from researchers based and affiliated with the Institute, often resulting from collaborative funded projects and workshop discussions.

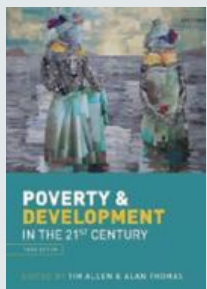
CPAID further endeavours to support book projects with partners in Africa. Dr Gedion Onyango at the University of Nairobi has published a comprehensive, edited work on [African public policy](#) with Routledge, collating work from a team of distinguished and upcoming Africanist scholars as well as Institute researchers.



Routledge Handbook of Public Policy in Africa

“This is an extremely ambitious book dealing with the making and implementation of public policy in Africa over a long time in diverse countries, both in terms of historical heritage and contemporary political regimes.”

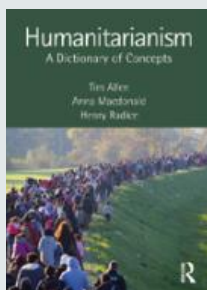
P. Anyang’ Nyong’o Professor of Political Science, and The Governor County Government of Kisumu, Kenya



Poverty and Development

“Essential reading for students of international development, policy-makers, and anyone thinking about the human condition in our interdependent, globalised world.”

Kevin Watkins, Chief Executive, Save the Children UK



Humanitarianism: A Dictionary of Concepts

“Humanitarian agencies have been subject to intense critical attention for over two decades now. With this volume’s vast expertise, comprehensive scope, and compelling presentation, perhaps this time they will listen!”

Adam Branch, Director of the Centre of African Studies, University of Cambridge

Academic and policy reports in partnerships

Research at CPAID and other FLIA research projects have produced numerous reports and policy briefs in partnership with academic institutions, NGOs, and government departments globally. These reports include a range of input, often from multiple organisations working collaboratively, and consolidate expertise into rigorous, practical publications to guide future scholarship and on-the-ground policymaking.

Academic reports include explorations into the politics of [South Sudanese legal institutions](#) during periods of war, produced with the NGO World Relief in South Sudan, an examination of [NGO responses to COVID-19](#), supported by UK Aid and The Research People consultancy, and a study into [household financial coping strategies](#) in the DRC, alongside the NGO Mercy Corps, and many more. Policy briefs have also been produced on health responses to [Ebola outbreaks](#) and the [localisation of humanitarian aid](#), in partnership, respectively, with the University of Makerere and the East Africa Research Fund, funded by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

Multi-partner grant applications

To build its network and critical expertise, CPAID encourages joint grant applications from multiple partners, especially with organisations working in and from the African continent. This approach to research and knowledge production not only brings unique viewpoints to complex social, political, and economic issues, but the opportunity is created for researchers to discuss methodologies and findings with scholars from different disciplines and regions, and practitioners outside the academic environment. The diversity of perspectives in the Institute’s work supports a critical assessment of current approaches and how research might be usefully applied.



Safety of Strangers course for African researchers

In 2020/21, as part of the [Safety of Strangers](#) research grant, the FLIA ran its first online course in Humanitarian Protection in Theory and Practice. Developing capacity for research project design and writing original research, the course focused on supporting early career African scholars and humanitarian practitioners, taught by a range of academics from LSE, the University of Gulu and Makerere University in Uganda, and University of Juba, South Sudan. Nearly fifty participants signed up to the course from eight African countries.

Following this course, FLIA Visiting Fellow Dr Grace Akello, based at the University of Gulu, initiated a mini-grants programme with funding from the Safety of Strangers grant. Eight grants were awarded to junior researchers, and these grant holders are now mentored by academics involved with the course and the Safety of Strangers project. Grant holders will produce blogs and research papers for a special peer-reviewed journal issue to present at conferences.

United Nations leadership course in humanitarian responses

In 2021, researchers at the FLIA partnered with the Global Executive Leadership Initiative, supporting capacity building initiatives and knowledge exchange amongst senior leaders working in United Nations humanitarian agencies and international NGOs. Hosted under the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), an eight-week course, designed by Professor Duncan Green and Dr Tom Kirk, will advance how leadership teams influence media engagement, strategic communications, and humanitarian diplomacy in their daily work.



Photo: A park in Kartoum - Laura Mann

The course, based on face-to-face and online learning modules, will be delivered in five UN regional hubs in two rounds of training during 2022. Geared towards ensuring immediate impact among leadership teams, modules will be largely experiential, using case studies, simulations, conversations with practitioners, group discussion, and mentorship to build expertise in addressing real-world challenges.

Investigating public authority

Research at CPAID

Established in 2017, the [Centre for Public Authority and International Development](#) (CPAID), funded by the ESRC/GCRF, has made significant contributions to understanding governance in fragile and conflict-affected regions. Beginning with a focus on locations of armed conflict, population displacement, and social reintegration in Central, East, Northeast and West Africa, the Centre has grown to investigate the epidemics of Ebola and COVID-19, and engage with comparative work outside of the continent, including in Europe.

With 22 projects across six countries, CPAID draws expertise from universities, NGOs, and the private sector across Africa, engaging over fifty researchers in dedicated, collaborative programming. Projects seek to understand the full range of actors claiming or being allocated power through appeals to popular social norms, the provision of public goods, and, sometimes, violence, with a large body of work published as books, journal papers, blogs, and policy briefs, and discussed in both workshops and public debates.



Photo: Sierra Leone - Jonah Lipton



WHAT IS PUBLIC AUTHORITY?

Public authority is any kind of authority beyond the immediate family that commands a degree of consent - from clans, religious institutions, aid agencies, civil society organisations, rebel militia, and vigilante groups, to formal and semi-formal mechanisms of government.

Raising the conceptual profile in scholarly debates

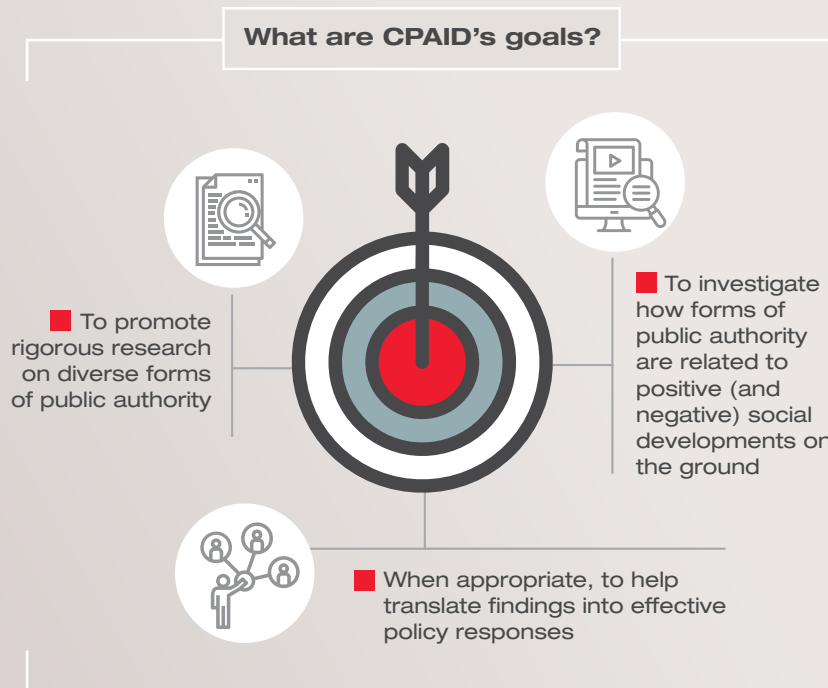
Thinking in terms of [public authority](#) enhances our understanding of what actually happens on the ground in certain regions, and why some policy interventions persistently fail. While a public authority lens is not new to scholarly work, CPAID's application of the lens to places affected by acute social upheavals, and where formal governance is challenged or weak, usefully reveals the potential of existing arrangements to contribute to or obstruct provision of services, promotion of wellbeing, and economic development.

Through an extensive range of publications and scholarly debate in public forums, including themed journal editions and event panels at conferences, CPAID has elevated the conceptual profile of public authority and its relevance to contemporary issues. Not only has it enabled increased recognition of the multiple ways in which socio-political dynamics influence livelihoods, disease outbreaks, health, and well-being, but the renewed attention on public authority contributes to re-thinking core concepts underpinning contemporary policies and practice – health security, resilience, sustainability, to name a few. Applying the Centre's substantial research findings and insights from Africa to pressing problems and debates outside the continent will be an important aspect of future research trajectories.



Photo: CPAID researchers devising research methods in the DRC - Pat Stys.

Photo: A CPAID writing workshop in Njala, Sierra Leone.



CPAID seminar series

Each academic year, CPAID hosts a series of [seminars](#) with academics from across LSE, the UK, and institutions abroad to discuss how public authority relates to development. These seminars take place in intimate settings where researchers present their work and engage the CPAID network. In addition to showcasing research from the Centre's core funded projects, topics cover a broad geographic and conceptual range from disciplinary perspectives across the social sciences, investigating the complexity of public authority in its relation to governance and inclusive growth.

Hosting over 20 workshops since 2017, the seminar series has addressed issues ranging from land conflict in Uganda to school education in the DRC, from infrastructure investment in Ethiopia to the politics of saving endangered indigenous knowledge.

Making impact

CPAID research has direct implications for governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, and, since 2021, courts of law. Based on empirical evidence, its researchers strive to make [real-world impact](#) through clear recommendations, expert reports, and policy-oriented workshops.

Advising the OECD

Core members of CPAID have formed a reference group and met with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to shape the organisation's understanding of effective peacebuilding.

As part of a [two-day workshop](#) in March 2020, CPAID researchers questioned the ways aid donors often enter conflict and fragile state contexts, uncritically assuming that certain actors – governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector – should remain at the heart of their work. The CPAID group cautioned that this blanket approach to interventions may have adverse effects, such as contributing to ineffective 'peace economies' and thereby creating forms of economic dependence, hierarchies of peace actors, and hegemonic narratives.

Supporting early warning systems for famine in South Sudan

Famines in South Sudan have been common in recent years and are only worsening. The aid community have often been slow to respond when they occur. CPAID research into [local justice systems](#) has uncovered that local chief-run courts – named *luok cök* or 'Hunger Courts' – are used during famines in South Sudan to redistribute food during these periods, which rule on how to redistribute food within clans. Because these courts are



Supporting early warning systems for famine in South Sudan. Photo - UNMISS meeting in South Sudan - UN Photo-Isaac Billy CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

closer to the ground, local chiefs can see the emergency coming earlier than humanitarian organisations.

The World Food Programme conducts large surveys in South Sudan twice a year to assess hunger and the risk of famine. After informing the World Food Programme and the UN-affiliated [REACH](#) initiative about these findings, the organisations agreed to include questions on Hunger Courts in their surveys, which have been drafted with the support of Dr Naomi Pendle. Incorporated into four surveys by 2021, the project continues to feed into UN discussions about how Hunger Courts can be used as early warning systems.

Influencing a landmark trial at the ICC

CPAID research conducted in northern Uganda has had a significant [impact on a landmark trial](#) at the International Criminal Court (ICC), based on anthropological work on cultural understandings of sexual wrongdoing and its relation to international humanitarian law. Ahead of the trial of former Lord's Resistance Army commander Dominic Ongwen for charges of sexual crimes, CPAID's Professor Tim Allen, Dr Holly Porter, and Dr Anna Macdonald presented evidence at the ICC of a nuanced explanation of rape in the Acholi-specific context. The research showed that despite the absence of Western understandings of appropriate relations and consent, the LRA sex was transgressive.



Landmark trial at ICC

The research helped the prosecution expand the charges against Ongwen to include sexual and gender-based crimes, and Professor Allen was invited to act as the 'expert witness' in the trial. In February 2021, the ICC found Dominic Ongwen guilty on 61 counts. Moreover, the research established an important precedent

in the international trial of sexual crimes – a key submission in a successful proposal to allow victims of sexual violence to provide witness testimony and

be cross-examined before the commencement of the trial. This aspect of the Ongwen case sets a ground-breaking precedent in the ability to prosecute international crimes of a sexual nature.

Quotes

“ A milestone precedent for future cases, not just in terms of circumventing situations of witness interference but, more importantly, in safeguarding vulnerable victims and witnesses, and preserving their evidence for any eventual trial.

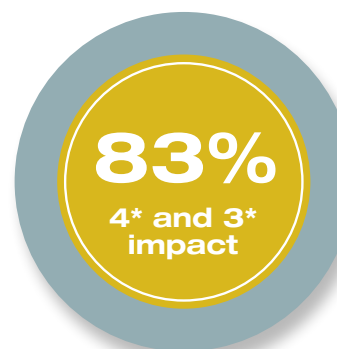
- [International Criminal Law Review](#) on the Ongwen trial

“ The role of Prof Allen and Dr Porter in the Ongwen trial has been significant, their expertise enriching and influencing decision-making that has positively impacted and furthered the process of international criminal justice.

- Trial lawyer of the Office of the Prosecutor

“ Dr Porter's report ... played a key role in the preservation of vulnerable evidence of sexual and gender-based crimes in the pre-trial phase of the case. The novel preservation of this evidence... itself amounts to an important and historic judicial precedent at the ICC, because it amounted to, in essence, judicial intervention to protect vulnerable persons by preserving their evidence quickly, while safeguarding their well-being.

- ICC prosecution trial lawyer



This case study was featured in LSE's submission to the UK's 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) for International Development, which recognised the School's outstanding contribution to social science research.



New research initiatives

Becoming an Institute opens new avenues for innovative programming, outreach, and engagement at LSE and within Africa. As the Institute has expanded, it has mobilised its network and brought in new partners to respond to events in Africa and assess the challenges the FLIA is well-positioned to help address.

Environment and climate change partnership

Climate change and environmental degradation is affecting Africa in extreme and unprecedented ways. To respond to this global emergency, the FLIA is collaborating with the LSE Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Global Development Hub at Imperial College London, as well as African academics from the University of Nairobi, Western Cape University, University of Botswana, University of Lagos, and the University of Namibia. The collaboration is creating a multi-disciplinary research bid to assess the effects of climate change and environmental degradation in African regions using hybrid approaches from the natural and social sciences.

China-Africa Initiative

China's influence and engagement on the African continent over the past decade has surpassed that of any other country. China has become Africa's leading investor, trading partner, digital services provider and, increasingly, soft power actor. It has become clear that China's role in Africa's future will be both complex and enduring.

Yet this geopolitical transformation remains poorly understood, with polarising views of the interests and tensions between these regions. The [China-Africa Initiative](#) will strive to enlighten, debate and, where possible, influence and inspire Chinese engagements in Africa through research, policy engagements, and events, including China-in-Africa conferences, workshops, and exhibitions.

The China-Africa Initiative will also encompass multi-stakeholder perspectives and engage multi-disciplinary discourses in the social sciences and humanities. In addition to regular publications on [FLIA public platforms](#), the Initiative will demonstrate a commitment to broaden China-Africa research projects, working with departments at LSE and globally, and contribute to student-led programmes and the FLIA's ongoing Programme for African Leadership.



Photo: China Africa initiative - President Cyril Ramaphosa and President Xi Jinping co-chairing Forum on Cooperation (GCIS).



Photo: Africa Trade Policy - Jan Taylor - Unsplash.com

African Trade Policy Programme

Throughout human history, trade has played a key role in generating prosperity and growth. This has been achieved through leveraging comparative (and competitive) advantage for the exchange of goods and services. Economic thought, theory, and practice attribute a key role to trade in transforming economies and societies.

Today, trade is recognised as a driver of growth, sustainable development, and poverty reduction. But it requires trade policies that are dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to both opportunities and constraints in constantly changing national, regional, and global contexts.

The [African Trade Policy Programme](#) brings together international expertise on African trade policy, trade negotiations, and trade policy formulation and implementation to evaluate and contribute to trade policies that can help African countries to better leverage trade as a vehicle for inclusive development. The Programme team has extensive experience working with countries, development partners, and international organisations across trade policy research, design, innovation, and implementation.

PERISCOPE

[PERISCOPE](#) is a large-scale research project involving a consortium of 32 European institutions to investigate the social, economic, behavioural, and mental health-related aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a leading partner in delivering PERISCOPE objectives, the FLIA brings together LSE faculty members across the Department of Economics, Department of Anthropology, Department of Health Policy, Department of Social Policy, and the LSE Behavioural Lab.

The project aims to gather data on the broad impacts of COVID-19 to develop comprehensive, user-friendly, and openly accessible data, perform innovative statistical analysis, identify successful practices and approaches adopted at the local level, and develop guidance for policymakers to enhance Europe's preparedness for future similar events. Research findings will seek to propose reforms in the multi-level governance of health.



Photo: Periscope - creative commons - Unsplash.com

The SoPriMa Project

Launched in 2022, the [SoPriMa project](#) undertakes a detailed empirical investigation of the market for public and private primary care services in Soweto, Johannesburg. Mapping the local market, the project will focus on health provider performance and demand for private services from uninsured cash-paying patients.

Using a randomised field experiment, the research will compare the performance of private and public providers in terms of accessibility to services, providing important information on the ability of the private market to deliver better health system access. The results will be relevant to many low- and middle-income countries trying to expand universal healthcare within mixed health care systems.

Ongoing projects

The Institute's long-term projects generate a large portfolio of peer-reviewed research, producing recommendations for governments, civil society organisations, and foreign aid donors. Each project draws on expertise from researchers in Europe and Africa, expanding the Institute's scholarly network globally.



Living the Everyday

Health-seeking in times of sickness and epidemics at Uganda's borders

Based in the West Nile sub-region of Uganda, the [Living the Everyday](#) project conducts research on the borders of Uganda-DRC and Uganda-South Sudan, where international attention has focussed on Ebola-preparedness efforts. The project employs the FLIA's extensive interdisciplinary expertise in the region while developing new partnerships to provide much-needed perspectives on health-seeking.



Datafication and Digital Rights in East Africa

Exploring public communications and the informal economy in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia

People's daily lives in East Africa are increasingly mediated through digital platforms. The [Datafication and Digital Rights](#) project seeks to understand these changes in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia by focussing on everyday experiences and economic activity, particularly how digitisation and datafication are reshaping public communications and the informal economy.



Ethnographies of (Dis)Engagement

Understanding vaccine rejection in chronically neglected communities across the G7

[Ethnographies of \(Dis\)Engagement](#) explores orientations towards COVID-19 vaccines among social groups who have reported some of the lowest rates of vaccine uptake across the G7 and globally. The research is based on Roma collectives living across Italy, migrants in Rome and at Italy's border, and African diaspora communities in Canada. The project uses contextualised evidence and methodologies to guide practical solutions within and beyond selected case studies.



Safety of Strangers

Understanding the realities of humanitarian protection

The [Safety of Strangers](#) project investigates the impact of local protection mechanisms in South Sudan and its borderlands, which has been a primary site for testing humanitarian protection. The research includes disciplinary approaches including anthropology, history, theology, ethnomusicology, and curatorial studies, with training and mentorship of early-career scholars in South Sudan and Uganda central to its impact.



Historical and Political Dynamics of the NGO Sector in South Sudan

Informing the localisation agenda

Informing the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office's engagement with South Sudan's localisation agenda, this [project](#) seeks to understand the historical and political dynamics of local and national NGOs. The work investigates the way South Sudanese NGOs approach, understand, and navigate the challenges of delivering aid, how they engage with wider political economies, and how their ideological basis becomes reimagined in the process.



Localised Evidence and Decision-making (LEAD)

Addressing the need for locally relevant evidence in public health decision-making

The [LEAD project](#) focuses on the transmission and control of schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminths around the African Great Lakes Region, with fieldwork in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda. Through new research and an extensive series of workshops, the project creates explicit links between local practitioners and the development evidence, identifying local evidence needs and the complexity of implementation from the local perspective.



Deconstructing Notions of Resilience

Exploring coping strategies and resilience in post-conflict Uganda

This [research](#) explores how people negotiate, experience, and understand their own coping strategies and resilience, as well as how these are affected by external forces and interventions. Drawing upon historical and anthropological approaches, extensive fieldwork focuses on three post-conflict settings in Uganda: pastoralist Karamoja, areas affected by the LRA insurgency, and West Nile, which has hosted multiple waves of refugees from South Sudan.



A Tale of Two Valleys

Data-driven agro-innovation in California's Central Valley and Kenya's Rift Valley

[A Tale of Two Valleys](#) uses a political economy approach to examine digital innovation and the commercialisation of digital data in agriculture across two inter-connected field sites: Kenya's Rift Valley and California's Central Valley. It seeks to understand how different players (tech and agritech firms,

farmers, farmworkers, traders and agribusinesses, policymakers, and donors) collaborate or compete to advance societal innovation while furthering their own interests.



Rockefeller grants

A series of projects investigating 'resilience'

In 2016, researchers were invited to submit proposals for projects under the broad theme of 'resilience', focussed on developing country contexts. Now hosted by the FLIA, [ten projects](#) supported by the IGA-Rockefeller Research and Impact Fund are conducted under four broad subthemes: financial resilience, climate resilience, resilient cities, and resilience in post-conflict transitional processes.



'With or against the flow'

Water governance in Goma, DRC

This [research project](#) examines households' daily management, financial governance, access to water, and other basic social services in the city of Goma, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The project uses an innovative mix of social network research, ethnography, and governance diaries to gain in-depth data on how residents navigate public authority in insecure environments and cope with unforeseen shocks.



3. BUILDING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Connecting with staff, students and publics

A central goal of the Institute is to build global partnerships with groups and organisations that share similar objectives. Being more than outward-facing, and promoting its work internationally, the FLIA embeds collaboration in projects from early stages. An invested community with whom the Institute can share ideas, and learn from, improves the quality of work while strengthening global networks.

A culture of collaboration

At the FLIA, staff are encouraged to be reflexive, active listeners, and to seek collaborators and stakeholders' feedback in relation to Institute programming and engagements. This means a commitment to generating new ways to learn from our students, audiences, and partners, in the events we hold, the programmes we run, and the research we undertake. True collaboration is at the heart of what the FLIA is striving to achieve, where we learn together, not in isolation from one another.

By working across LSE with myriad departments undertaking research and teaching on Africa, the Institute seeks to build a strong community of academics and students working on the African continent across the School and connect them with our wider network internationally.



Partnerships with African institutions

The Institute has built and continues to strengthen partnerships with African institutions for research and training. Such collaborators are the University of Johannesburg (South Africa), Gulu University (Uganda), University of Nairobi (Kenya), Njala University (Sierra Leone), and University of Juba (South Sudan). These partnerships in our research are equitable, in which academics between global North and South institutions engage from idea generation to award stage on projects, and this approach has helped create an enriching research environment that is inclusive and trans-geographical.

As the [research programme](#) has expanded, the FLIA's partner researchers in South Sudan have also developed and led projects through the [Centre for Public Authority and International Development](#). Gatwech Wal, a South Sudanese researcher based in Juba, explores the politics of legal institutions in Unity and Lakes States during periods of war and peacetime. A further project led by Ngot Mou investigates the influential role of cattle camp leaders, known as majokwut, asking how their authority shapes people's everyday lives as they govern local labour. The Institute supports the local ownership of these projects, producing a model for equitable research driven by African understandings.

International networks

To increase the quality and reach of our work, the FLIA has built a large international network of scholarly and practical expertise, ranging from higher education bodies and civil society organisations to both local and international NGOs, and even artists. Almost one third of peer-reviewed [publications](#) at the [Centre for Public Authority and International Development](#) are produced from formal collaborations, while many partnerships produce channels for exchanging ideas and creating real-world impact, including support for LSE students, alumni, and researchers in their professional development.

Collaborations built into the Institute's research programme promote the exchange of scholarly work, building an ecosystem of knowledge production internationally.



Credit: Pexels.com

These include the African organisations RESCONGO, the Bridge Network, and RAKO, which have, respectively, enhanced the rigour of engagement with peace and security issues in the DRC, land regimes in South Sudan, and humanitarian scholarship in Somalia – all feeding into debates among national research networks. The Institute has also worked with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a Switzerland-based non-profit supporting our work to strengthen African trade policy as part of the [African Trade Policy Programme](#).

Formal collaborations with NGOs also drive practical, policy-oriented engagement. Organisations such as Mercy Corps and the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime are integrated into the Institute's fieldwork practices and provide opportunities for influencing key policy issues. Additionally, as a member of the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS), the FLIA has strengthened links with European universities, supporting efforts to promote interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Africa.

Private sector collaborations

To advance the reach of the Institute's work in influential sectors, the Institute creates partnerships with private sector organisations based in Africa or working on Africa-related issues. Previous collaborations have included [workshops](#) with Silk Invest, bringing together business leaders in finance and trade to discuss strategies for sustainable development, and scholarships through Standard Bank, which since 2016 has funded three LSE Master's student placements for African nationals annually.

The Institute's [Africa Engagement Programme](#) currently has partnerships with the African Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (AVCA) and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC). These partnerships cover a range of activities, including internships for African students and alumni, as well as activities aimed at knowledge mobilisation through communications and events partnerships.

Creative research communications

Different mediums for different audiences

A variety of print and digital publications are crucial to the FLIA's scholarly output, including monographs, edited collections, journal papers, and blogs, and to connect with diverse audiences the Institute also presents findings using different media. Working closely with global partners, especially in Africa, our range of outputs ensures engagement remains accessible, creative, and embedded in local expertise.



Two podcasts from the Institute exemplify this commitment. In its second series, the [Citing Africa](#) podcast investigates knowledge production about and from the African continent, covering topics ranging from journal publishing and research funding to the application of postcolonial theory to global health, digital sectors, and social policy. Linking ideas about how structural factors shape the type of information we value, Citing Africa complements the Institute's [Decolonisation Hub](#) for staff, students, and researchers, by addressing how these inform ways of thinking inside universities and international organisations.

Started in 2021, the [Public Authority Podcast](#) asks how governance and humanitarianism in conflict-affected areas actually functions. Inviting experts from the [Centre for Public Authority and International Development](#) and elsewhere to discuss the ways public authorities beyond state actors shape daily lives, political control, and economic activity across Africa, both podcasts draw on the Institute's vast network of researchers, development practitioners, and civil society leaders.

The Institute also maintains an expansive [YouTube channel](#), where all online events are made available for a global audience. Additional videos document the FLIA's many initiatives for students, alumni, and publics interested in debates involving and affecting the African continent.

Exhibitions and cartoons with African artists

VIGILANTES: SECURITY OR INSECURITY



Through collaborations with artists across the African continent, the FLIA disseminates scholarly findings using visual mediums to reach non-academic global audiences. By encouraging engagement between the artist-researcher, new ways of thinking about and expressing fieldwork seeks to generate interest with local communities, policymakers, and civil society leaders in affected countries.

In 2018, the [Politics of Return](#) project organised an Artist in Residency programme with 32° East/Ugandan Arts Trust, which explored ways to present [new narratives](#) around the experiences of forced displacement and cycles of violence in Uganda, South Sudan, the DRC, and the Central African Republic. The residency led to the exhibition 'When We Return', organised in multiple sites across Uganda in 2019, such as Gulu, Makerere University in Kampala, and the French and German embassies. More than creating a space for meaningful dialogue between local communities, national and international policymakers, and development practitioners, the exhibition inspired further organisational partnerships, including between a Ugandan NGO supporting victims of forced displacement and UN Women.

The FLIA also uses cartoons to communicate and present complex narratives derived from long-term ethnographic fieldwork. A six-part series of graphics on public authority, [CPAID Comics](#) uses real-life stories based on research conducted in Uganda, South Sudan, the DRC, and Sierra Leone to show how different, and often competing, public authorities affect people's everyday lives. Illustrated by cartoonists from the respective countries, the series explores issues such as the effect of [vigilantes on combatting crime](#),

competing views within [refugee settlements](#), challenges faced by communities living near [national parks](#), and how actors can manipulate [peace-building processes](#) to cement their authority.

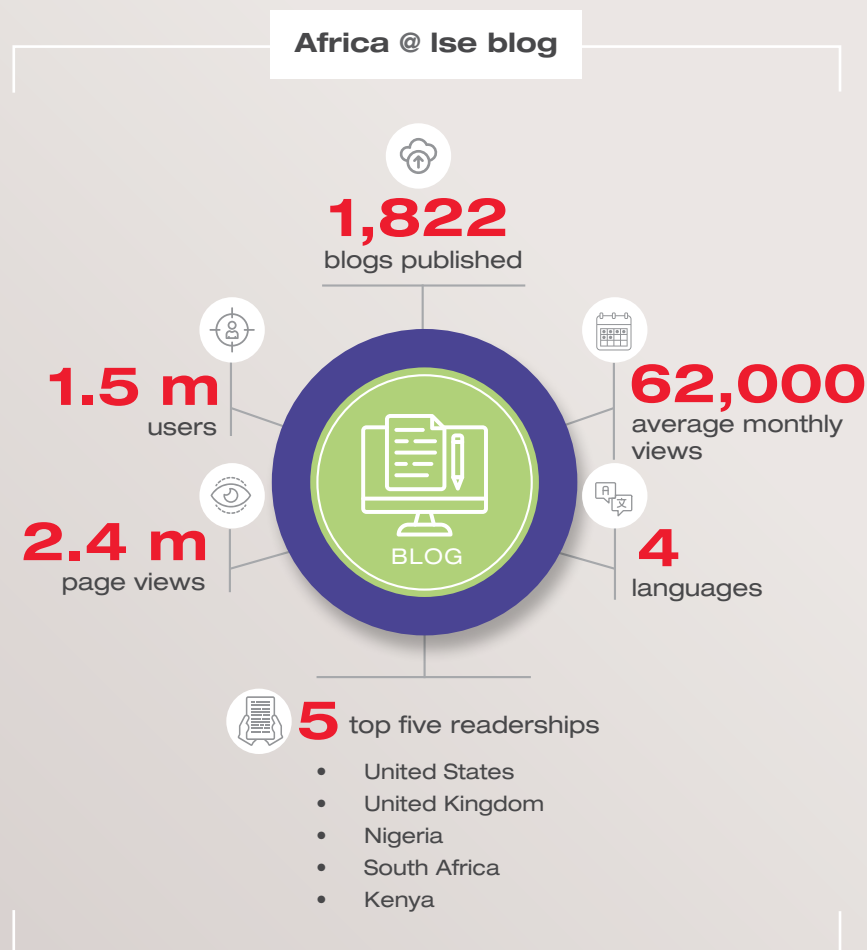


Blog partnerships and series

In its eleventh year, the Institute's [Africa at LSE blog](#) continues to grow as a world-leading platform for critical analysis on African socio-economic and political issues. Its LSE and internationally based contributors present peer-reviewed research accessibly for a wide readership, and scholarly expertise is brought to bear on contemporary events.

In addition to regularly published content, each year the blog partners with education institutions on themed series, where single and multi-authored articles over several weeks or months address significant emerging issues affecting the continent. As demonstrated by partnerships with the [University of Njala](#) and the [University of Melbourne](#), these series develop links with scholars beyond the Institute's primary research interests, consequently expanding research networks and paving the way for long-lasting, future collaborations.

Themed series have in recent years addressed the [increasing interconnectedness](#) of China and Africa, [epidemic preparedness](#) for zoonoses, [African masculinity](#), the [politics](#) of contemporary Burundi, [youth activism](#), [inequality in Nigeria](#), and the [ethics of research fieldwork](#), and more. Moreover, to address the need for informed debate on emerging challenges resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, the blog has launched a [COVID-19 portal](#) to host work investigating the social and economic impacts of the pandemic and health interventions. Additional series are linked to ongoing research projects, which includes the [Public Authority series](#), driven by outputs from CPAID researchers and the wider Africa-based network, as well as the projects [Deconstructing Notions of Resilience](#), [A Tale of Two Valleys](#), and [Localised Evidence and Decision-making](#).





Strengthening alumni networks

Programme for African Leadership network

Since its inception in 2012, LSE's [Programme for African Leadership](#) (PfAL) has aimed to create broad and deep African alumni networks through the [PfAL Network](#), a global group of 500+ LSE alumni from 42 African countries. PfAL actively encourages diaspora Africans to take part in the programme, with many members living in the United States and Europe after graduation.

The alumni network aims, firstly, to provide each PfAL graduate with an extensive network of like-minded peers to exchange support. Secondly, the initiative develops a global African leadership network that links together Africans from a variety of backgrounds and countries. The scope of these connections develops an understanding of the continent not only from national African perspectives but from across the continent. As the network has developed, members have been increasingly platformed at public events, workshops, and professional talks, and received [media recognition](#) for their work post-LSE.

The PfAL Network also supports its members through digital platforms, where job opportunities, career development advice, ongoing projects, and requests for assistance or collaboration are shared and discussed. These platforms form a space of mutual aid where alumni can assist each other's growth, creating a knowledge-based community that serves the development of its members.

PfAL Forum

The biennial [PfAL Forum](#) is a flagship event at the Institute to develop LSE's African alumni network. Bringing together PfAL graduates to discuss leadership and personal development, as well as form or renew friendships through LSE, the multi-day event was held in Uganda and Kenya in 2016 and 2018, with the next Forum planned to be held in Ghana in 2023.

At the Digital PfAL Forum in 2020, panellists and speakers from the PfAL Network shared valuable [expertise](#) based on their career journeys and life after graduation. Scores of members were able to engage one another through structured sessions and debate leadership issues specific to the African context.



Building a community around open debate

In collaboration with African partner institutions, scholars, activists, business leaders, students, policymakers, and development professionals, the FLIA hosts a wide range of [public and private events](#) to provoke new debates on issues affecting the continent.

Public events

Since 2016, the Institute has invited hundreds of world-leading researchers and practitioners to speak on its campus and virtual platforms, who have participated in seminars, workshops, lectures, roundtable discussions, book launches, and film screenings. These events not only push forward new ideas but forge connections with and between diverse organisations, building a global community focussed on real-world issues.



Internationally renowned for centring African voices, the FLIA's events have in recent years addressed topics ranging from development and humanitarian issues,

raised by the Institute's research, to debt relief, trade policy, technological advances, climate change, citizenship and belonging, the decolonisation of knowledge systems, and African literature. Since 2020, events have also brought to a wider audience the Institute's research into epidemics, and a [series of discussions](#) have explored the wider social and economic impacts of COVID-19.



Africa Talks

Held several times a year, the Institute's flagship events series [Africa Talks](#) invites prestigious African speakers to present their work at high-profile public events. Informing global debates, and inspiring new perceptions of the continent, the series engages voices from within Africa and in the diaspora to guide the continent's sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

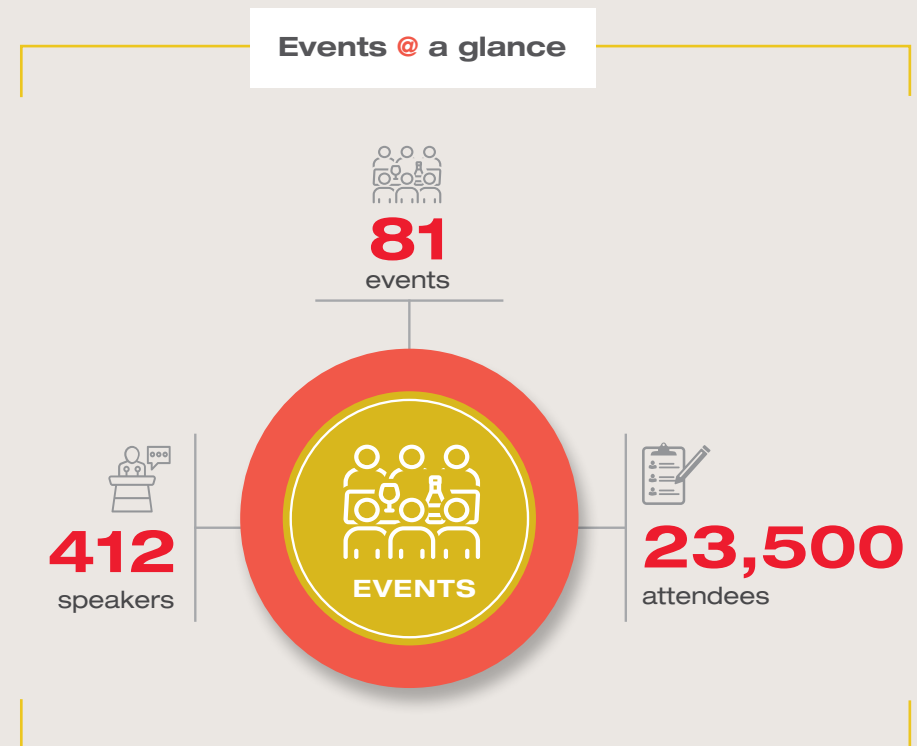
Predating the Institute itself, Africa Talks symbolises the [long tradition](#) of engagement between LSE and the African continent, building on the history of world-renowned leaders, politicians, and researchers speaking to audiences at the School. In recent years, prominent speakers have included Meaza Ashenafi (Chief Justice of the Federal Supreme Court of Ethiopia), Fadumo Dayib (the first woman to run for President of Somalia), the economist Dambisa Moyo, and Professor Amina Mama, Editor of the journal *Feminist Africa*.



Africa Summit

Every year the FLIA recruits a committee of 20 LSE students to lead the production of LSE’s [Africa Summit](#), which brings together head of states, renowned academics, senior policymakers, leading entrepreneurs, influential artists, philanthropists, and students from across Africa and its diaspora. Over two days, these speakers share ideas on a specific theme and develop relationships to transform debate into meaningful action.

Over the years, the Summit has been attended by influential policymakers and politicians from across the continent, including Nana Akufo-Addo (President of Ghana), Yemi Osibanjo (Vice-President of Nigeria), Dr Donald Kaberuka (former president of the African Development Bank), Ibukun Awosika (chairman of First Bank of Nigeria), Cristina Duarte (Special Adviser on Africa to the United Nations Secretary-General), and Dr Stella Nyanzi, the Ugandan human rights activist.





International conferences

By participating at international conferences, FLIA researchers promote the Institute's work and research findings to large audiences across the world. This has grown the Institute's reputation on the global stage as a source of cutting-edge research. Additionally, a [two-day conference](#) organised by the Institute in partnership with the NGO Save the Children, in 2019, brought together humanitarian policymakers from the UK and West Africa to discuss the history and future of child protection.

More than showcasing published fieldwork and findings, the FLIA has also presented its work at conferences through artistic mediums. An exhibition at the Kampala Geopolitics conference at Makerere University, Uganda, displayed research outputs from the [Politics of Return](#) project, curated in partnership with 32° East/Ugandan Arts. The exhibition drew attention to how refugees, internally-displaced persons and former combatants negotiate and experience 'return' in Central and East Africa.

Decolonisation Hub and LSE engagement

As part of LSE's commitment to addressing entrenched inequalities within higher education, and the colonial legacies of power relations affecting staff, students, and researchers, including in Africa, the Institute established in 2020 the [Decolonisation Hub](#) to support anti-racism and equitable practice at LSE and beyond.

An ever-expanding resource, the Hub hosts a range of initiatives working towards promoting LSE's Race Equity and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion goals, formalises the [Institute's commitments](#) to decolonial practises, and provides a space for collaborating with and supporting colleagues and students with likeminded objectives across LSE departments.



4. ENGAGING WITH LEADERSHIP

Programme for African Leadership

The [Programme for African Leadership](#) is an extra-curricular programme focused on leadership development and networking, available to graduate students of African nationality currently studying at the School. Since its launch in 2012, more than 550 students from over 40 countries have taken part and joined the international PfAL alumni network.

PfAL workshops on skills development and network-building

Since its inception in 2012, the Programme for African Leadership has taken an active role in developing the skills and potential of African MSc students and alumni from LSE. PfAL aims to support students with a wide range of activities focused on skills-building for their future careers that can be applied to any sector, creating long-term African networks and providing pastoral care to students while they study at the School.

Each year the students undertake the PfAL Projects, which encourages collaboration on the design and planning of an initiative to improve Africa in the areas of health, education, arts and culture, or trade and travel. Workshops with LSE Generate, LSE Business Improvement Unit, LSE Careers, and LSE Student Counselling develop organisational skills, teach effective project management and entrepreneurial skills, and support preparations for life after graduation.

The PfAL team in London and the [PfAL Network](#) internationally also share opportunities for career development, further study, and interesting events or conferences. These create a knowledge-based network that supports the development of its members through mentorship and dedicated communications channels through Google and LinkedIn.



PfAL leadership code

The PfAL students in the third and fourth cohorts collaborated to create a code and values for the programme. These values encapsulate the vision of the programme to make a positive impact on the continent, and have been used by subsequent cohorts to guide projects and critical group discussions.



Supporting initiatives that reduce poverty in a sustainable manner, and where necessary challenging those that create dependency



Working to foster **social justice and human rights** on the continent



Strengthening and mobilising the **voices of African citizens** at national, regional, and international levels



Promoting **African intellectualism**, storytelling, expertise, higher education and research



Fostering an environment where **young Africans** can reach their full potential



Empowering and mentoring others to take up leadership within their areas of influence



Providing an enabling environment where **women have equal opportunities** to succeed



Actively fostering and furthering the **PfAL network** through collaboration with our fellow network members

Alternative approaches to leadership

The PfAL programme explores the concept of leadership and its various approaches and contexts. One such approach is ‘collaborative leadership’, which acknowledges the need for more than one leader to achieve substantial positive change in communities, including input from all sections of African society. Collaborative leadership approaches seek to engage those who will be most affected by decisions, valuing consensus and compromise as a strength, and foregrounding knowledge of local contexts.

The programme also explores how the concept of leadership - within all levels of society or groups, not only the decision-makers at the top – can offer positive change. These ideas interrogate possibilities for becoming a leader at any professional level and in any context in order to pursue a style of leadership based more on values than hierarchy.



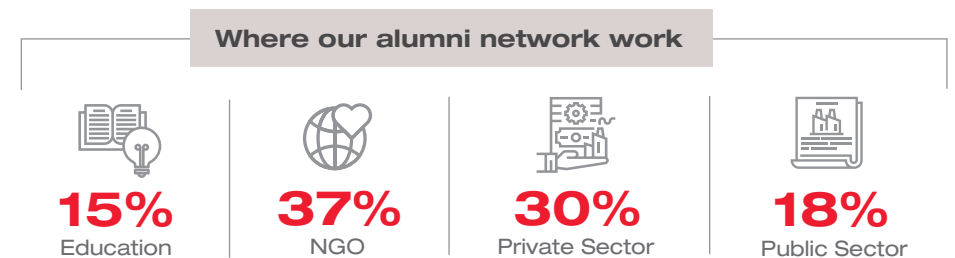
Leadership workshops

These alternative concepts have been further investigated in workshops delivered annually to PfAL students by FLIA Visiting Senior Fellow Dr Vanessa Iwowo, a lecturer at Birkbeck University. Building on studies of organisation psychology and ideas of positive African leadership, these workshops have encouraged robust debate on the concept of leadership and the ethical dilemmas it presents. Student cohorts are encouraged to think critically about collaboration, practical applications of leadership, and different forms of leadership across the world.

One of the theories explored in these workshops is the value of Ubuntu – “*I am because we are*”. Promoting an ethos of inclusive, collaborative leadership, this value was endorsed by students in the 3rd and 4th cohorts of the programme to guide discussions around what effective forms of leadership development can mean in different contexts.

Where are they now?

After graduation from LSE, the programme’s alumni have pursued varied careers and many are working in senior positions, assuming leadership roles in Africa and internationally. Some alumni have also established their own enterprises, managing projects and teams with social impact.





Madvee Muthu (PfAL cohort 2) is an economist specialised in social policy, development, gender, and SME development. With 15 years of experience working in project management and policy analysis, Madvee launched in 2018 [‘Bees with Stories’](#), a project connecting economic empowerment and biodiversity conservation. Her mission is to bring African bee

products to the global market and ensure that African smallholder farmers acquire a larger share of the margin.



Pinaman Owusu-Banahene (PfAL cohort 8) is a fashion tech entrepreneur with experience spanning public policy and regulation, primary care, and project management. Turning to entrepreneurship, Pinaman is the CEO and creative force behind [ADJOAA](#), a curated premium fashion and lifestyle brand e-marketplace, providing access to the market for African and diaspora designers.



Ojok Okello (PfAL cohort 4) has created a social enterprise that uses green energy and natural resources to transform his village, Okere Mom-kok, into a [thriving and sustainable town](#), which was left in ruins after more than a decade of war in northern Uganda. Led by the local community, the project uses 200 hectares to produce electricity from solar power, featuring a school, health clinic, village, bank, and community centre.



Leadership within the Institute

Leadership within the Institute aims to take a collaborative, creative, and non-hierarchical approach that seeks gender balance and broader inclusivity. The Institute has a senior management team that consists of three programme managers, the Director (a senior academic), the Institute’s Strategic Director (a former Director at the United Nations), and the Institute Manager.

The leadership team is designed to include voices from each facet of the Institute to ensure discussions and decisions are made collectively. Decision-making power within the Institute is devolved to the

programme managers to ensure ownership of their work, supported by clear lines of communication within the senior management team to connect programme objectives and ensure alignment to Institute goals.

Supporting researchers as Principal Investigators

The Institute takes seriously the issue of precarity in Higher Education. Wherever possible, the FLIA supports early career researchers to apply for and hold research grants in the Institute as Principal Investigators. These grants may be small sums not often targeted or prioritised by other centres or Institutes, but they are instrumental in helping researchers build their academic profile, develop project management skills, and obtain experience in leadership roles.



We also prioritise support to early career researchers with bridge funding between projects to ensure staff do not have gaps in employment. Our approach to supporting early career researchers as grant holders and applicants has been successful in numerous instances where researchers have, after several years at the FLIA, secured permanent tenure-track roles at universities, such as the Universities of Cambridge and Bath in recent years. Furthermore, the Institute welcomes academics from different departments to hold their research grants in the FLIA, where they are supported with administration and event planning and involved in Institute-wide activities.

By creating a supportive environment for early career and senior academics, the Institute aims to create an intellectual environment that will continue to grow and be a thriving hub for idea generation and innovative, multidisciplinary research.

Programme managers

Within FLIA's leadership the programme managers play a critical role in the Institute's development and success. These managers have line management, budgetary, and day-to-day decision-making responsibilities. They are involved with strategising for the Institute and bring invaluable perspectives from the student body who they work with, such as the Programme for African Leadership students and LSE bodies such as the Communications Division.

The programme managers also take on important roles within LSE, sitting on committees such as Embrace, EDI, Risk Advisory, and the Blog Governance Board. They are a part of the reflexivity of the Institute, building connections and partnerships, looking for gaps to redress and help shape Institute goals and direction. Through more ownership, the programme managers have been able to grow the programmes in new and exciting directions.

Mentoring junior researchers and graduate interns

Mentorship is valuable to anyone at any stage of their career. From graduate interns to post-doctoral fellows, the FLIA is working to provide a structured approach to mentorship that empowers staff and affiliated students with the support, leadership, and knowledge base they need to grow in their careers and succeed in their work. All junior researchers, for example, are carefully paired with an academic mentor with whom they meet throughout the year. The FLIA works closely with LSE departments to match the mentor and mentee and to find an academic who can perform their career development review. These academics are external to their mentorship arrangement to keep the relationship wholly supportive.





5. INVESTING IN EACH OTHER

Supporting career journeys

The Institute takes seriously its responsibility to nurture staff members' talent and to use a range of initiatives to support the Institute's wider LSE community.

For example, the African Engagement Programme (AEP) runs an annual [Career Transitions Lab](#) for African post-graduate students interested in pursuing a career on the African continent. The Lab runs over three days and explores the African job market, how to plan for success, and how to transition from academia to industry.

Furthermore, researchers based at the Institute are encouraged to teach seminars and deliver guest lectures within departments to gain valuable teaching experience. The FLIA also provides away days for staff with dedicated time to hone different skills through independent research or building skills as part of a team.

Nurturing professional services staff

Traditionally, professional services roles in Higher Education have lacked a clear development trajectory. Often, professional services members move posts, divisions, and departments to gain varied experience and responsibility. The FLIA is keen to change this dominant structure and to provide a career pathway for professional services staff members who are passionate about our work and want to develop their skills in a particular area. Roles at the FLIA range from graduate entry level all the way up to senior programme manager positions. Each of the Institute's five programmes require a diverse skillset and knowledge base, and we hope that employees will invest in our work and see a career pathway available to them.

This ethos has motivated the creation of an [internship programme](#) within the African Engagement Programme to develop students' skills in Higher Education during their degrees. The Institute further provides funding for external training, whether it is for Prince 2 training or a specialised



communications course. The Institute is dedicated to staff career progression at every stage.

Fellowship programme

The FLIA has been developing and fundraising for an African Fellowship programme. The programme aims to recruit African post-graduates for at least a year to work on their research at the Institute and become a part of its intellectual life, establishing their networks within LSE and the UK.

The programme provides funding for conference attendance and participation, as well as support for grant applications and opportunities for research collaboration. A top fundraising priority for the next three years, the programme aims to generate further opportunities for African PhD graduates.

Writing workshops in Africa

The FLIA is dedicated to two-way exchanges with African partners, supporting capacities in effective written communication and academic authorship. Through the [Centre for Public Authority and International Development](#), the FLIA's researchers have run writing workshops in Africa to strengthen these skills among doctoral students, early career researchers, lecturers, and practitioners.

In 2018 and 2019, Leben Moro (University of Juba, South Sudan), Grace Akello (University of Gulu, Uganda), and LSE Visiting Fellow Naomi Pendle hosted two British Academy-funded writing workshops in Kenya and Uganda. In total, over 20 early career researchers attended from Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan. The workshops prompted a range of papers on questions surrounding governance and public authority in local contexts. Additional workshops in Uganda, run by researchers Ryan O'Byrne and Naomi Pendle in August 2019, supported new writing projects for 8-10 Uganda-based colleagues in Gulu and Moroto.

In partnership with the University of Sierra Leone and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, CPAID's Tim Allen, Melissa Parker, Georgina Pearson, Jonah Lipton, and Liz Storer facilitated a week-long writing [workshop at Njala University](#). Focussed on developing articles for publication, the workshop created a space for early-career scholars from across Sierra Leone to produce work rooted in personal experience or ongoing projects.

PfAL mentorship

Started in 2020, the PfAL Mentorship Programme connects current LSE students on the Programme for African Leadership with members of the [alumni network](#), providing the opportunity for former PfAL students to provide guidance and support. Groups of 2-3 alumni took responsibility for mentoring groups up to eight PfAL students, and mentors were able to use their industry experience and knowledge of LSE to aid their mentee groups.

Strong communities were built within the PfAL 10 cohort through virtual sessions. Using a hybrid model for future cohorts, the mentorship programme will merge physical and virtual events to create long-term bonds that work across global regions and professional contexts.





Firoz Lalji PhD Thesis Prize

Awarded for an outstanding contribution to knowledge on Africa, the [Firoz Lalji PhD Thesis Prize](#) is awarded every two years to one first place and one second place PhD thesis hosted at LSE. The work is widely promoted, and successful researchers receive a financial reward.

In 2022, the Institute was pleased to announce the winners of the inaugural prize to four candidates, selected by an internal committee of LSE academics for producing high-quality work on the African continent.



Joint winners



Henry Musa Kpaka

Essays on Traditional Institutions and Their Impact on Economic and Political Outcomes (2021).



Richard Stupart

Bearing Witness: Practices of journalistic witnessing in South Sudan (2020).

Director's Prizes



Kate Dawson

Shifting Sands in Accra, Ghana: The Ante-Lives of Urban Form (2020).



Camille Pellerin

The Politics of Public Silence: Civil Society – State Relations Under the EPRDF Regime (2019).

Africans in higher education

AEP Transitions Lab

African postgraduate students exploring careers related to Africa on and off the continent



In June 2021, the FLIA's [Africa Engagement Programme](#) (AEP) launched the [AEP Career Transitions Lab](#) – a four-day online programme participated by 30 African postgraduate students from 10 African countries. The Lab equipped students with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to support their transition from scholarly work at LSE to professional work pursued on the African continent.

This space facilitated structured discussions and an exchange of ideas about how best to pursue careers that create a positive impact in Africa.

Building a community of peers to support one another's career journey, the programme included career workshops, conversations with industry professionals, and networking. While workshops focussed on the students' self-purpose, career values, and cultural tools for transitioning into the African job market, a forum for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange encouraged discussions about experiences related to working in African contexts, and the skills considered important. Students also delivered presentations on an industry or organisation of interest to their career journey, based on individual research and informational interviews carried out with industry professionals.

Further conversations encouraged the students to seek mentorship and build networks to access the African job market. The Lab provided the opportunity to interact with industry professionals from influential organisations, such as the African Development Bank, PwC, Deloitte, Movemeback, LSE, and successful start-ups led by social entrepreneurs.

AEP Transition Lab outcomes



- 1** A greater understanding of the African job market and industry dynamics 
- 2** Enhanced knowledge of familiar and unfamiliar industries 
- 3** Insights into how postgraduate careers can impact issues facing the African continent 
- 4** A deeper awareness of personal career journeys 
- 5** Ability to network with LSE African alumni and other industry professionals 
- 6** Confidence transitioning into employment after graduation 

Quotes

- “ *The Lab gave me the tools to self-assess and know how my values shape my career choices.* ”
- Seth Gyamfi, MSc in Health Policy, Planning and Financing
- “ *I learned a lot from the cohort and the speakers, particularly how candid everyone was about their career experiences.* ”
- Ijeoma Nwala, LLM
- “ *My favourite part was interacting with other people from and interested in Africa ... I learned more than I ever thought I would from them.* ”
- Kieran Dunn, MSc in Philosophy and Public Policy
- “ *Getting to organise what is in my mind regarding careers into conceptual frameworks has been the most valuable experience.* ”
- Diana Nasike, MSc in Global Health Policy
- “ *The Lab allowed me to build upon my social network, bringing me into contact with like-minded people.* ”
- Catherine Nana Boafoa Owusu, MSc in Development Management

Pathways through higher education blog series

In 2020/21, the Africa at LSE blog launched the series [Pathway to Success for Africans in Higher Education](#), which provoked new conversations about the journeys African nationals experience when navigating tertiary education. The series explores topics such as youth employment, transitions into the job market, building successful careers, and filling information asymmetries to access higher education opportunities.

Blogs in the series



[Clearer information can increase educational access for African international students](#): demystifying the application processes and sharing key information for eligible African nationals who want to enter higher education in the global North.



[African students' access to higher education is a priority for the continent's development](#): addressing the challenges of the post-COVID world in higher education in Africa and exploring the coping mechanisms developed by schools and organisations.



[Networks and student support are vital for developing African leaders in higher education](#): reflecting on how to develop ethical leadership among high-skilled youth through student support systems and networks.



[How to transition from university into the African job market](#): expanding on the skills and strategies African graduates need to enter an increasingly competitive and dynamic job market.



[How students can build a successful career in Africa](#): exploring the role of universities and the resources they can provide to graduate students during their transition from higher education into the African job market.

LSE students

The FLIA runs numerous initiatives to engage students across LSE departments. In addition to the student-focused [Programme for African Leadership](#) and the student-led [Africa Summit](#), since 2016 the Institute has strengthened opportunities for students at LSE engaged with African issues. These include [writing competitions](#), workshops promoting student career transitions, funding for students writing MA dissertations, and a prize for the [best dissertations](#) focussed on African issues.

MA dissertation funding and prize

The Master's [Dissertation on Africa Prize](#) celebrates outstanding fieldwork and research on Africa, awarded each year to the year's most innovative dissertations that further our understanding of the continent. Awarded to thirteen students in total from 2020-22, students are selected for recipients in categories including 'Outstanding Dissertation', 'Innovative Research Techniques', and 'Contribution to Decolonising the Curriculum'.

In 2019, 15 students received the [MSc Dissertation Fieldwork Grant](#), who were encouraged to travel to African countries to pursue their dissertation research. Recipients studied a variety of topics, from rights-based activism by mining affected communities in South Africa to sex workers' self-perceptions and economic challenges in Ghana.

Student blogs based on prize-winning research



[Designing meaningful employment for Kenyan youth](#): In the face of high youth unemployment, social enterprises in Kenya seek to promote work opportunities through 'decent' jobs, challenging the focus on employment figures.



[Confronting inequality in South Africa through rights-based activism](#): Activist groups working to challenge South Africa's mining industry are using human rights to progress their cause.



[Ending statelessness in West Africa is crucial for domestic and regional security](#): At least 1 million people in West Africa are impacted by statelessness, with hundreds of thousands more at risk. The Statelessness Conventions may be unrealistic to address this crisis.



['Sustainable' futures and state-instigated ruin in Cairo](#): In Cairo, the rhetoric of sustainability has been a cover for a project of mass displacement, with urban demolition and construction causing locals to be evicted from their homes.

Student's Union funding

As part of the FLIA's ongoing commitment to support initiatives working towards a more just and equitable society, every year the Institute provides £5,000 in funding for LSE Student Union societies, particularly initiatives serving BAME undergraduates. In recent years, funding to the Afro-Caribbean Society has contributed to public events and social networking opportunities for LSE students on campus.

Writing competitions

To promote innovative writing among students across LSE, the Institute launches annual writing competitions for under- and postgraduates to feature their work and research on the Africa at LSE blog.

In 2018, LSE students were invited to [submit for publication writing](#) exploring the global influences and contribution of the African diaspora. All [shortlisted submissions](#) were published on the blog and students were encouraged in the development of their work with the FLIA editor. In 2021, the Institute launched the competition '[Black Forgotten Heroes](#)', where students were invited to submit a short post on historic figures whose international contributions in politics, art, business, and activism have been overlooked. Students submitted critically [engaging posts](#) and three winners were selected from an incredible shortlist, each awarded a cash prize and provided editorial development.

AEP internships

As part of the Africa Engagement Programme, in 2021 the FLIA launched the [LSE Africa Internship Programme](#), which provides a four-to-twelve-week remote work placement for African students enrolled in an LSE postgraduate programme or alumni who graduated within the last two years.

In addition to providing mentorship and leadership development to selected students, with support from LSE Careers, the programme supports selected students who have the intention of continuing their career on the African continent after graduation, or who are interested in working on African issues long-term.

Providing an experiential learning opportunity for LSE students and alumni with graduate level work, the programme allows interns to build new skills, expand their network, gather insights from the industry that interests them, and build confidence in entering the job market. As the programme expands, partnerships will be built with host organisations from different industries interested in employing high-quality LSE graduates.

Africa PhD Research Day

The [Africa PhD Research Day](#) is an annual event to bring together LSE's PhD students working on Africa, creating connections between students from different departments to showcase the breadth of the School's work on the African continent. Organised as part of the Africa Engagement Programme, the initiative will further the FLIA's commitment to support the personal, professional and career development of students researching Africa.

The first PhD Research Day was held on 25 May 2022, including presentations from current and recent PhD students on topics ranging from the localisation of aid in South Sudan to the impacts of weather shocks on household budgets in Nigeria. Based on LSE's Research Development Framework, the day sought to nurture researchers in the effectiveness of their knowledge production, research organisation and governance, communication practices and impact.





6. DIRECTOR'S VISION

“ As we move forward from our inaugural year as an LSE institute, with COVID restrictions lifting, there are opportunities for face-to-face meetings and events that we have not had for a long time. During COVID lockdowns, we have also learned a great deal about what is possible to do remotely, and communicating in hybrid ways is something that has become normal. This is of great significance because it allows us to engage more substantially and consistently with colleagues based in Africa and elsewhere, as well as those in the UK.

We have been strengthening our collaborations and will be working ever more closely with staff at universities in, for example, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan. Looking ahead, we will simultaneously be looking to create stronger connections with scholars and students at LSE, as well as at other institutions outside of Africa, many of which we have already been working with through such organisations as the Royal Africa Society, International African Institute, and African Studies in Europe. It is particularly important that we strengthen our relationships with the LSE's departments and institutes across the School. We will be doing this in multiple ways, including by our support for students, and through our internal advisory board (to which all LSE staff working on Africa will be invited to participate).

The Institute will additionally be expanding efforts to increase the number of scholarships offered to African students. Meanwhile, our comparative research within and outside Africa will continue to grow and widen, offering new opportunities for scholars to become involved in our work. Furthermore, we hope to expand the thematic areas of our research to address challenges that significantly impact the African continent (such as environmental change, trade policy and economic transformation, and protection of children and vulnerable adults), and to bring African insights to broader discussions (currently well illustrated by our ongoing work on COVID in Europe).

With these plans for growth, we aim to see more scholars join the Institute and enrich its intellectual life. With the Africa Engagement Programme up and running, the next few years will see closer collaboration with African organisations to develop equitable and inclusive partnerships for research, teaching, and policy activities.

Overall, we intend to do all we can to accelerate the processes of placing Africa at the heart of LSE in terms of research, student and public engagement, and involvement with public affairs. ”



Professor Tim Allen
Director of the Firoz Lalji Institute
for Africa

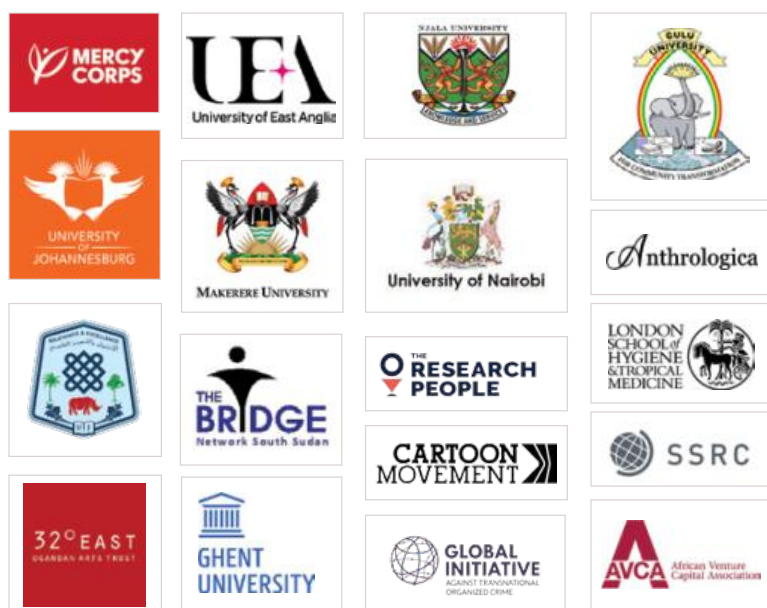


7. DONORS & PARTNERS

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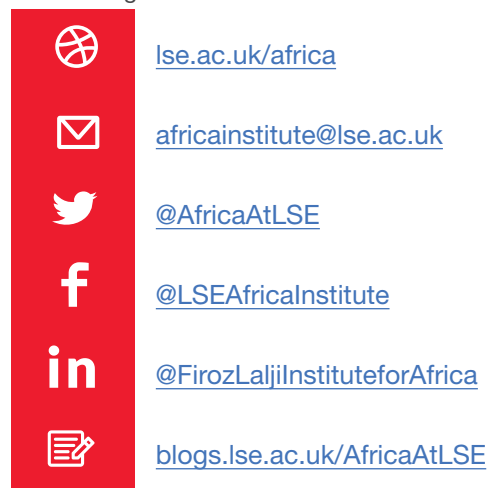


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The Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA) focuses on engagement with Africa through cutting-edge research, teaching and public events, strengthening LSE's long-term commitment to placing Africa at the heart of understandings and debates on global issues.

Contact us for more information:

Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa
 London School of Economics and Political Science
 Houghton Street, London
 WC2A 2AE
 United Kingdom





Willy Karekezi, 'State of Agony', 2018. Acrylic on Canvas and Refugee Testimonial Sound | 150 x 115 cm