

LSE

**Firoz Lalji Institute
for Africa**

**Annual Report
2024/25**





"The Institute is dedicated to building new connections by bringing together the School's African community and those researching and teaching on the continent. Through its values, programming, and research, FLIA promotes inclusive debate about the future of Africa.

The Programme for African Leadership is going from strength to strength and continues to build an expanding network of future leaders across the continent. Ahead of our 10th anniversary celebrations and our move into a new building on Lincoln's Inn Fields, this is an exciting moment for the Institute, and I look forward to seeing what the coming years will hold."

- Firoz Lalji





Welcome

In these turbulent times, the Institute continues to play an important role in offering fresh perspectives and innovative solutions for positive change. This year, the Institute has continued its work on public authority, gender, epidemics, trade, and criminal justice, while expanding its research into new areas such as hate speech, entrepreneurship, and activism, drawing comparisons from research in Africa to case studies in the UK.

In the spring, the Institute welcomed the Social Innovation Lab for Human Flourishing (SILF), led by Professor Harry Barkema. SILF works to identify how people and organisations can create meaningful and sustainable change by moving beyond simplistic economic approaches and measurements.

Another addition to the Institute this year has been the Activism, Influence, and Change Programme launched by Dr Duncan Green and Dr Tom Kirk. The ambition of the programme is to understand approaches to change. Through research, knowledge exchange networks, and courses with and for change-makers, the programme offers a unique blend of academic and applied approaches that get to the heart of how individuals and organisations can make an impact.

Meanwhile, the Institute has convened a series of meetings in South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia with politicians, journalists, lawyers, and NGOs on the ways in which social media and AI are hollowing out national media, and facilitating unregulated hate speech, sometimes with lethal consequences.

Throughout the year, FLIA has productively driven forward new initiatives, engagements, and research. Academic colleagues created new research agendas, and the community has collectively brought African perspectives to LSE to debate topics including climate change, trade, and conservation.

There are so many ways to get involved with the Institute, from attending our public events, following our research, or engaging with our public outreach initiatives. I hope you will join us next year, and we can welcome you to the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa in 2025/2026.



**Professor Tim Allen,
Director, Firoz Lalji
Institute for Africa**

Research Programme



Centre for Public Authority and International Development

Since 2017, the Centre for Public Authority and International Development (CPAID) has pioneered the "public authority" lens and examined how diverse actors, both within and beyond the state, claim and exercise power, with a degree of consent.

CPAID's importance lies in challenging the assumptions about formal governance that dominate international development. As the contemporary world grapples with a polycrisis of intersecting threats, CPAID research demonstrates that marginalised communities have long navigated overlapping crises. This perspective reveals that top-down "polysolutions" often fail because they ignore the local power dynamics and legitimacy structures that shape outcomes.

The October 2024 Makerere-LSE Symposium on 'Public Authority, Peace, and Polycrisis' exemplified CPAID's relevance and legacy-building. The event brought together scholars from institutions across continents and showcased innovative methodologies, like ethnomusicology, which capture unspoken political realities in authoritarian contexts.



The symposium's panels on health, justice, and research methods demonstrated public authority's versatility in understanding issues such as Uganda's military responses to Covid-19 or transitional justice processes.

CPAID's enduring legacy will be its methodological and conceptual innovation. The 2024 special issue in the journal *Global Policy*, entitled *Development Practice, Power and Public Authority* consolidated this contribution and showed how public authority dynamics shape humanitarian interventions. By revealing how legitimacy operates through multi-scalar networks rather than formal hierarchies, CPAID challenges practitioners to recognise their own roles as public authorities.

The future of public authority research lies in its application beyond traditional development contexts. This is exemplified by CPAID's pilot study on political belonging in post-industrial Britain. This expansion demonstrates the framework's universal relevance for understanding governance, legitimacy, and social protection in an era of global uncertainty.



"Few research programmes on African governance have achieved the close-knit multi-disciplinary, epistemological, and contextual embeddedness that CPAID has managed. The Centre has reasserted the authenticity and the influence of extra-institutional societal networks in governance processes during crises, in post-conflict reconstruction, and through strategic state reforms." Dr Gedion Onyango.

"CPAID offered me new lenses for approaching my long-term scholar activist work with grassroots actors in Africa. Seeing them as public authorities enabled me to see that the state is not always wholly absent but instead works with them in informal ways. CPAID gave me a new perspective on the paradoxes I had observed in their work."

Dr Eliza Ngutuku.



CPAID Publication Highlights

- Ngutuku, E. (2025) *Children's Lived Experience of Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya: Going beyond multi-dimensionality*. Routledge, Oxford, UK.
- Onyango, G. (2025) *Social Processes of Public Sector Collaborations in Kenya: Unpacking Challenges of Realising Joint Actions in Public Administration*. *Journal of Knowledge Economy*, 16: 8141-8171.
- Simpson, N., Storer, E., & Duale, S. (2025) *Hostile environments: Mould, race and blame amidst Birmingham's housing crisis*. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 0(0).
- Parker, M., Okello, B., Kermundu, P., Ozunga, B. E., Baluku, M., Akello, G., MacGregor, H., Leach, M., Allen, T. (2025) *Did COVID-19 vaccine enforcement work? Evidence from northwestern and northern Uganda*. *Social Science & Medicine*. 382, 118273.
- Atingo, J., Allen, T., Macdonald, A. (2024) *Witnessing Ongwen: A Betrayal of Expectations?* *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 22 (5): 785-802.
- *Development practice, power, and public authority. Special Issue.* (2024) *Global Policy*, 15 (4).
- Lipton, J. (2024) *In the Time of Ebola: Youth, Family, and Emergency in Sierra Leone*. Cornell University Press, New York, USA.
- Pendle, N. (2023) *Spiritual Contestations–The violence of peace in South Sudan*. James Currey, Suffolk, UK.
- Sarafian, I. (2023) *Contesting Moralities: Roma Identities, State and Kinship*. Berghahn, Oxford, UK.
- Onyango, G. (2021) *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy in Africa*. Routledge, Oxford, UK.
- Allen, T. and Thomas, A. (2021) *Poverty and Development in the 21st Century*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.



CPAID Research Impact Highlights

Dr Eliza Ngutuku worked with grassroots actors in child protection services in Uganda and Kenya. She engaged with staff from the County Children Area Advisory Committee through a workshop that disseminated her project's research. The findings were integrated into training for volunteers and safeguarding officers to improve services to children.

In 2021, Professor Melissa Parker contributed to the Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours, which reported to the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies on pandemic preparedness and response. Specifically, she focused on vaccine hesitancy among ethnic minorities in the UK with a public authority lens that was informed by her research in Uganda.

In November 2024, Dr Tom Kirk and Dr Anna Macdonald contributed a public authority perspective to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's *States of Fragility* report.

Ahead of the trial of former Lord's Resistance Army commander Dominic Ongwen in 2015, CPAID's Professor Tim Allen, Dr Holly Porter, and Dr Anna Macdonald were invited to talk about rape at the International Criminal Court.



Drawing on their research into how public authority relates to sexual violence and accountability, they provided evidence of a complicated and nuanced explanation of rape and its aftermath. Professor Allen was the 'expert witness' in the trial, and his testimony provided further information about the LRA's organisational relationships, its training, and use of child soldiers. In February 2021, the Court found Dominic Ongwen guilty on 61 counts.

CPAID Researcher Spotlights

Jacky Atingo Owacgiu, PhD candidate



Working with CPAID has been a transformative part of my academic journey. I began my PhD in 2022, and have already submitted my first draft thanks to the support and stimulating environment the Centre has offered.

My research has focused on post-conflict recovery, reintegration, and justice in northern Uganda, particularly the long-term experiences of children who returned from the Lord's Resistance Army. This has resulted in several publications that have shaped my growth as a scholar and filled critical gaps in the literature.

In 2021, I co-authored a paper titled 'Legacies of Humanitarian Neglect: Long-term Experiences of Children who Returned from the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda', published in journal *Conflict and Health*. This was followed by a paper titled 'Rejection and Resilience: Returning from the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda' published in journal *Civil Wars* in 2022. As lead author, I led the development of the manuscript 'Witnessing Ongwen: A Betrayal of Expectations?' published in the *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, it offers critical insights into local perceptions of international justice processes. I am currently preparing a single-authored paper titled 'Beyond Aboke', for submission to journal *Conflict, Security and Development*.

Through these projects, I have significantly improved my academic writing, developed stronger research methodologies, and deepened my understanding of the intersection between local experiences and broader justice and governance systems.

Without CPAID, these achievements would not have been possible. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to contribute to addressing pressing research gaps and to be part of such a dynamic and collaborative scholarly network.

Grace Akello **Professor of Medical** **Anthropology**



Alongside CPAID, I have worked on pandemic preparedness and public authorities' efforts to control alcohol addiction among citizens and refugees in Uganda.

My overarching findings regarding pandemic preparedness include the disconnect between local realities and the policies being proposed. Uganda's Covid-19 response was heavily supported by global health partners, who proposed one-size-fits-all policies. The result was that even though Uganda's experience with Covid-19 was mild and the population saw itself as low risk, the militarised regime punished, incarcerated, and enforced vaccination to people's dismay.

State authorities reached out, coerced, and sometimes bribed micro-level authorities to promote the global health agenda. When the state failed to attain the global health metrics, they diverted their attention to other local health priorities. This helped create a general distrust among citizens with implications for current and future disease containment efforts.



In my other work on addiction, I have shown how some people in Uganda resort to alcohol in anticipation of positive outcomes, including forgetting their distress, being able to sleep, and becoming courageous enough to face everyday stressors. In recent years, Uganda has seen a record increase in alcohol addiction and is now the highest alcohol consuming country in Africa.

Through my research, I have learnt about the intricate interconnections that exist between various public authorities at the global, national, and local levels. As they work together, there is disjuncture and the production of unequal power relations, particularly in the Global South.



CPAID in Numbers

43

BOOKS,
MONOGRAPHS,
AND CHAPTERS

140

PAPERS

58

EVENTS

154

BLOGS AND
MEDIA ARTICLES

6

SPECIAL ISSUES

9

CREATIVE/
ARTISTIC
OUTPUTS

6

TRAINING
COURSES

8

POLICY BRIEFS/
REPORTS



**CPAID in
Numbers**



Centre for Women, Peace and Security



The coming academic year will be about resilience and sustainability as we celebrate and reflect on the 25th anniversary of the UN Security Council Declaration 1323 that created the women, peace and security agenda.

Starting us off will be an event with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and UN Women Peace and Humanism Fund. The theme will be intergenerational learning and solidarity, and we are delighted that the Peace is All of Us soundtrack will be released at our event.

Our main academic engagement with this historic moment will be led by Centre Manager, Dr Caroline Green, and Visiting Fellow, Dr Diana Koester. It will include a senior-level discussion panel, representation at key international events, and an anniversary publication of journal articles on the next 10 years of WPS.

We are honoured and delighted to be hosting the UK launch of a major publication on international criminal law and international and intersectional feminism. This groundbreaking book, *Feminist Judgements: Reimagining the International Criminal Court*, will consist of 60 contributors, including from countries where the ICC has been active. It will be edited by world leading scholars in the field, Kcasey McLoughlin, Rosemary Grey, Louise Chappell, and Suzanne Varrell.

Finally, the year begins with the completion of the WPS's flagship online resource for combating gender-based violence through the law. The Tackling Violence Against Women website contains a unique collection of legal primers, case studies, and interviews that has recently been updated and extended by our Senior Visiting Research Fellow, Dr Lisa Gormley. This will continue to be an area we prioritise for future funding, to consolidate and sustain our own institutional history and legacy.



Professor Joanna Lewis, Director of Centre for Women, Peace and Security

Events

'Advancing Women, Peace and Security in Palestine' shed light on Israel's military aggression in Gaza and its effects on women in the region. The event shared the voices of Palestinian women, girls, and other marginalised groups who are central to defining what peace and security mean for Palestine and the wider region.



The panel discussion 'Peacemaking Using Islamic Principles' featured Mark Muller KC from LSE and Eldridge Adolfo from the Folke Bernadotte Academy, who presented the outcomes of the International Norms Project. The research convened Islamic scholars, Muslim political transitional leaders, and peace practitioners to produce the first *Guide to Peacemaking Using Islamic Principles*, which includes engagement with the WPS agenda.



WPS collaborated with Women for Peace and Participation (WPP), International Civil Society Action Network, and Women in International Security Italy on 'Advancing Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan.' The event focused on strengthening Afghan women's roles in peacebuilding and decision-making in 2025. WPP presented the *Strategizing a Seat at the Table* initiative as a practical framework to advance Afghan women's leadership.

On International Women's Day, in collaboration with the Arab International Women's Forum, LSE International Development Department, LSE Middle East Centre, FLIA, and WPS hosted 'Empowering Women in Agriculture: Navigating Peace, Conflict, and Food Security.' The conference convened leading scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to examine the intersection of gender, agriculture, and food security in the context of peace and conflict.

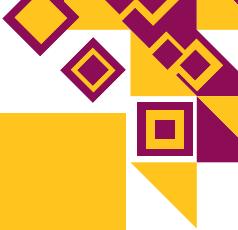


WPS welcomed Pius D Ojara, Director, Refugee Law Project, School of Law, Makerere University, who spoke about 'Weaponisation of Masculinities by hegemonism: Experiences of South Sudanese male refugee survivors of male rape in Adjumani, northern Uganda.'

WPS hosted an event to mark the fourth anniversary of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. The first panel focused on women's health in Afghanistan. The second featured a senior legal representative from the International Criminal Court, who discussed the recent arrest warrants for crimes against humanity, including gender persecution, committed in Afghanistan. This led to the report *Unhealthy Obsession* about the decline in women's health under the Taliban.

The Sudanese Women Leadership in Global Uncertainty programme, led by Dr Souad Mohamed empowered disadvantaged Sudanese women leaders and entrepreneurs who were displaced by the ongoing conflict in Sudan. The training took place in Egypt and was directly applicable to the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Sudanese women in the diaspora. It focused on emotional intelligence, effective communication, decision-making in uncertain environments, and strategic networking.





Natalia Baranova

Visiting Fellow

Centre for Women, Peace and Security

I have been living in exile from Russia since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. I have over ten years of experience in civil society projects, women's rights organisations, and independent media.

I was first labelled a “foreign agent” due to my anti-war activism and charged with a criminal offence. Had I remained in Russia, I would have faced a two-year prison sentence. Instead, I have found a safe space, a home, and solidarity at the Centre for Women, Peace and Security. Here, my research ideas and dreams about gender justice, both in my region and globally, have been embraced by a group of passionate feminist scholars.

Since joining the Centre, I have delivered public lectures on ‘What Does Feminist Peace Mean?’ in Berlin and Vilnius for the Russian-speaking diaspora. I was invited as an expert to the Frontline Club to comment on Russia’s gender-based disinformation and anti-gender propaganda as tools of repression and influence across Europe.

Last December, I organised an international online conference with the Labirint Project 'The Right to Safety: Laws against Domestic Violence in former Soviet countries' as part of the global campaign: #16DaysofActivismAgainstGenderBasedViolence.

My future research plan is to advance Women, Peace and Security, by resisting Russian anti-gender ideology and promoting feminist peace. The research will analyse how Russia promotes anti-gender politics around the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

My journey to the Centre for WPS was crucial and impactful; it drives me to continue to work on gender justice and promote feminist peace in challenging times.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of a collaborative academic space working together to address the root causes of war and promote feminist peace with solidarity, compassion, and care.

Activism, Influence and Change Programme

This year, FLIA launched the Activism, Influence and Change Programme (AICP), spearheaded by Dr Duncan Green and Dr Tom Kirk.

Citizens worldwide are increasingly disillusioned with mainstream politics and are turning away from established ideologies. They are using combinations of insider and outsider tactics to influence those in power and disrupt the status quo.

But we know far too little about which approaches to making change work and why. To begin to answer these questions, AICP will support a greater understanding of, and better practice among, intentional change makers at all levels by:

- Building a body of rigorous research on intentional influencing efforts undertaken by change makers at all levels, from grassroots organisations to the United Nations.
- Crafting and delivering bespoke, evidence-informed courses, toolkits, and training programmes in collaboration with change makers.
- Providing a platform for academics and change makers to network and exchange ideas and innovations.

AICP has begun a research project to uncover the range of recipes activists use to create change in fragile democracies, funded by a grant from LSE's Seed Research. It has also delivered a five week-long influencing course for activist organisations from across the Middle East, funded by the Asfari Foundation; and a week-long in-person course for environmental influencers, funded by the UN's G20 Global Land Initiative. It delivered workshops at LSE to the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity and designed a course on contemporary African politics for diplomats from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

In March 2025, it launched the Activism, Influence and Change blog as a platform to share case studies, thinking, and opinion. Posting two to three times a week, the blog already has an established readership, with 3,000 visits per month. Offers to write posts are coming in from an increasing range of thinkers and practitioners from diverse sectors. If you're interested in contributing, please contact the editors at t.kirk@lse.ac.uk or d.green@lse.ac.uk.





Social Innovation Lab for Human Flourishing

The Social Innovation Lab for Human Flourishing (SILF) develops and shares knowledge, skills, and practices that help companies, NGOs, and governments innovate for both economic success and human flourishing. Working primarily in Africa and South Asia, it focuses on the organisational processes, structures, and practices that drive sustainable innovation.

The approach is rooted in local contexts. Rather than apply generic models, the Lab conducts in-depth local research to build locally relevant theories. These are tested, refined, and scaled with local partners through practical experiments that advance both organisational performance and the flourishing of employees, clients, and marginalised communities.

In the coming years, SILF aims to:

- Expand research and knowledge exchanges with pan-African multinationals to strengthen sustainable innovation, competitive advantage, and stakeholder flourishing.
- Deepen engagement with entrepreneurs in informal settlements in East Africa for long-term ecosystem-level studies, before developing and sharing key innovations for both economic performance and human flourishing.
- Scale up collaborations with NGOs and governments in South Asia and Southern Africa to help build capabilities that empower teachers to empower children in low-income settings to thrive academically and as flourishing human beings.

SILF joined FLIA last year because of the strong synergies with initiatives such as the Programme for African Leadership. With the help of FLIA, the Lab aims to support the next-generation of innovation in Africa and South Asia to boost economic growth and human flourishing.



**Professor Harry
Barkema, Director,
Social Innovation
Lab for Human
Flourishing**



Africa Trade Programme

The Africa Trade Policy Programme, led by FLIA's Strategic Director, Dr David Luke, deliberately eschews short-term trade pessimism for the long-term perspective that, throughout human history, trade has played a key role in economic transformation.

The role of trade as a driver of growth, sustainable development, and poverty reduction is, however, not automatic. It requires trade policies that are dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to both opportunities and constraints in the face of changing national, regional, and global contexts.

The Africa Trade Policy Programme brings together international expertise on policy and negotiations to evaluate and contribute to trade policies that can help African countries to better leverage trade as a vehicle for inclusive development. Drawing upon the contributions of FLIA Visiting Fellows and Research Associates, the Programme team has extensive experience working with governments, development partners, and international organisations across trade policy research, design, and implementation.



The goal is to make trade policy work better for African countries with a special focus on intra-African trade and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

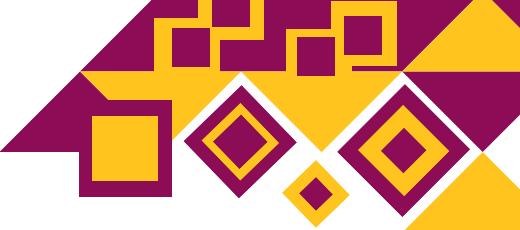
To achieve this, the Programme prioritises several key objectives:

- To significantly extend the current knowledge base on African trade policy for more informed decision-making on trade as a driver of sustainable development at various levels of policymaking.
- To demystify African trade policy as a specialised esoteric activity confined to a few experts to generate a better and more broad-based understanding of how trade impacts the lives of ordinary Africans and the continent's sustainable development aspirations.
- To produce easily accessible open access information on Africa's trade data, trade agreements, and up-to-date information on current trade policy issues, including at the intersection between trade policy and climate concerns.
- To empower policymakers, stakeholders, scholars, and others to interrogate the effectiveness of trade agreements, including in relation to sustainable development, inclusion, and poverty reduction objectives.



**Dr David Luke,
Professor in Practice
and Director,
Africa Trade
Programme**

Research



The Programme's first major research output, *How Africa Trades*, won the 2024 UK Business Council for Africa best business book of the year.



The Programme's second major research output, *How Africa Eats: Trade, Food Security and Climate Risks*, was published in May 2025 by LSE Press. The new book analyses why 280 million Africans, a fifth of the population, are undernourished and 340 million Africans, a quarter of the population, lived with hunger in recent years. Using a data-led approach, the book examines in detail what Africa eats, where and how it is produced, and the underlying trade dynamics behind its food industry.





Research outputs:

Navigating Climate Action: Assessing the Economic Impacts and the Trade-Offs of a Shipping Carbon Tax for African States. A joint publication with the Africa Policy Research Institute and the African Future Polies Hub, October 2024.

The Impact of Geopolitical Dynamics on Global Trade: The Case of the Africa Automotive Sector. A joint publication with ODI Global, April 2025.

Trade and Climate Sustainability Policy Briefs 2025. A joint publication with the African Climate Foundation, May 2025.

Teaching

During 2024-25, a new course on Trade Policy and Development was introduced as an elective in the School of Public Policy's Master of Public Administration and Master of Public Policy programmes at LSE.

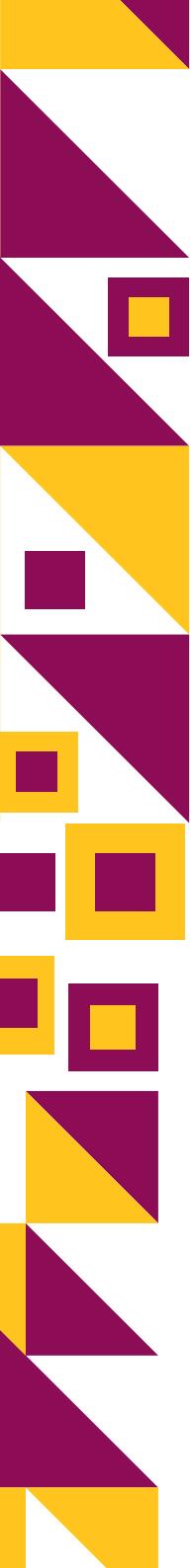


Engagements

Dr David Luke serves on the oversight board of the *LSE Business Review* and on the South African 2025 G20 Presidency Advisory Council.

He spoke at an event organised by Mastercard to mark Black History Month; delivered lectures on *How Africa Trades* at the University of Malawi and at North West University in South Africa in February 2025; participated in a roundtable on US trade policy in the Trump era and its implications for the Global South, organised by the Open Society Foundation on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank spring meetings in April 2025; attended a workshop on Human Rights Impact Assessment of Trade Agreements organised by the Friedrich Erbert Stiftung Geneva Office in Geneva in May 2025; and spoke at a retreat for African High Commissioners and Ambassadors in the UK organised by Development Reimagined at Sopwell House, Hertfordshire, in July 2025.





The programme's current projects include research funded by the Open Society Foundation for the book *How Africa Makes Industrial Policy*, based on case studies of Morocco, Senegal, Kenya, and Ethiopia. A second iteration of the *Trade and Climate Sustainability Policy Briefs*, funded by the Africa Climate Foundation, will focus on the policy interface between trade and climate. In particular, how this relates to carbon border adjustment measures in international trade, the role of critical minerals in sustainable industrialisation, and monitoring trade, climate, and sustainable development discussions at the WTO.

Senior Policy Fellow, Elizabeth May, has been appointed to support the research on these projects and to strengthen the Programme's capacity.

Thematic Research Agendas

Environment

Humans are shaping the world in unprecedented ways. Our activities are driving climate change, increasing environmental pressures, and causing biodiversity loss. Africa will be one of the continents most affected by these changes, which will drive socio-environmental inequalities.

In response to these crises, the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa has been developing its research on, and engagement with, human-environment relations.

Food Security

Dr David Luke's second edited book, *How Africa Eats: Trade, Food and Climate Risks*, was published by LSE Press this year. The book addresses why Africa struggles with food security and investigates what can be done to tackle these challenges. The co-authors analysed the intersection between trade, agricultural policies, and climate risks to investigate what is holding Africa back from becoming an agricultural powerhouse despite having 60 per cent of the world's arable land.



The book is open access and available to read online or download here.

A new project funded by the British Academy and CPAID examines how the drought-resistant crop cassava has been celebrated as a solution to food insecurity. The team, led by Visiting Research Fellow, Dr Liz Storer; PhD candidate, Charlotte Brown; and collaborator Professor Robert Kajobe from Muni University in Uganda, are examining how cassava might serve as a vehicle to understand frictions around health and health-related interventions. 'Charting Cassava's Ambivalent Histories in West Nile' incorporates innovative methodological approaches using plant history and archival research. The project asks how plant-human relations shape gender relations, socio-economic changes, and health in relation to survival, production, and innovation in Africa.

Deforestation

Concerns about resource depletion and land degradation in Uganda inspired Research Fellow, Dr Julian Hopwood, to explore deforestation in northern Uganda. His work involved investigating how forests are managed and mismanaged, what practices might lead to sustainable consumption by local communities, and how these practices might be adopted.

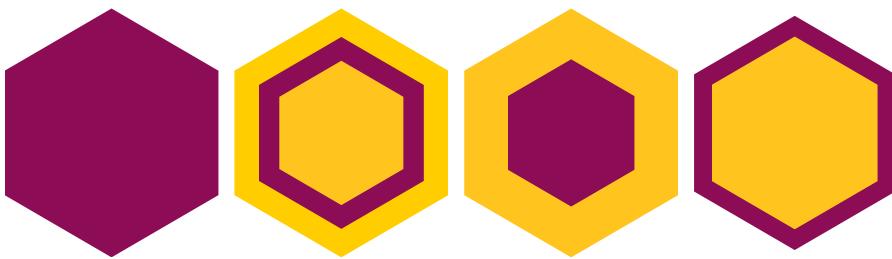


The project, funded by the British Academy, used innovative methodologies such as autoethnography and arts-based approaches to understand how local language and culture shape how problems and solutions are conceived by communities.

Biodiversity

Many species' lives and futures are now contingent on human actions to protect the habitats they depend on for survival. To explore the challenges, solutions, and opportunities for species conservation, Assistant Professorial Research Fellow, Dr Martha Geiger Mwenitete, collaborated with Tusk Trust and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to convene expert panels to discuss how humans can recalibrate our relationship with animals and the environment. Discussions have explored community-led conservation initiatives, economic policy changes, and how animals actively shape conservation outcomes in Africa and the UK.

Dr Martha Geiger Mwenitete and her collaborator, Professor Kendra Coulter from Huron University College, Western University, have launched a Leverhulme funded research project looking at human-wildlife cohabitation in small former mining communities in the western US. Drawing on multispecies storytelling, the project asks how human-wildlife cohabitation within extraction landscapes constructs understandings of belonging and care within these places?



Health

Since the beginning of the Institute, health has been a central focus for our researchers. FLIA's body of work in this area has shown how lessons learnt in Africa about public health can be applicable to other situations around the world. Our work on Ebola pandemics helped to set the foundations for further research into Covid-19 in the UK, while other research has examined the structure of healthcare provision across the continent.

FLIA Director, Professor Tim Allen, and CPAID colleagues published findings from their research on enforced Covid-19 vaccinations in Uganda in the journal *Social Science and Medicine*. Drawing on a public authority lens, the researchers showed the importance of moving beyond narrow public health metrics to engage with broader conceptions of whether enforced vaccination is effective and what the ramifications are of such an approach.

In addition to this work, the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone was studied by FLIA anthropologist Dr Jonah Lipton, who recently published *In the Time of Ebola: Youth, Family, and Emergency in Sierra Leone*. His book launch in December 2024 at FLIA marked a decade since the 2014-16 West African Ebola epidemic. Drawing on seven years of immersive fieldwork, his work discusses how the crisis was experienced on the ground. He offers insights into its lasting social and economic impacts on young people, families, and communities in Sierra Leone, and lessons for future global health responses.

Justice

FLIA's research into justice incorporates the full spectrum of issues, from convictions at the International Criminal Court to local authorities and magistrates courts. It looks at the practical application of justice and how it impacts people's everyday lives and communities.

Post-Conflict

FLIA has long worked in post-conflict countries such as Uganda and Sierra Leone. Recently, PhD candidate Jacky Atingo, along with Professor Tim Allen and Senior Visiting Fellow Dr Anna Macdonald, published a paper entitled *Witnessing Ongwen: A betrayal of Expectations?* in the Journal of International Criminal Justice. The article drew on their long-term work studying the aftermath of the Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army. The paper discussed the witnesses who testified at the trial of Dominic Ongwen at the International Criminal Court, the complexities of victimhood, and the lack of adequate protection and benefits accrued by women who were victims of sexual crimes committed by Ongwen.

Dr Claire Elder's research on 'Diaspora States in Somalia and Afghanistan', funded by a Marie Curie Fellowship, focuses on elites returning to post-war countries to take up positions in government, politics, and the military, and exploring its effects on modern government. The project examines how diaspora returns affect political and institutional development in two of the world's most fragile post-war countries: Somalia and Afghanistan.

FLIA was awarded from LSE a Knowledge Exchange grant for our project 'Training and Knowledge Exchange on Information Literacy During and After Transitional Justice Processes in Ethiopia and Uganda' that aims to improve the knowledge base of transitional justice actors on the role of media and new technologies. It also supports the development of media strategies that address the specific challenges faced by transitional justice. In January, the team travelled to Uganda to deliver a workshop. Participants discussed how social media companies could and should be held to account for the effects stemming from use of their platforms, and what an African response to this might look like. The workshop was particularly timely given the presence of tech bosses at Donald Trump's inauguration in the US and the ongoing lawsuit against Meta in Kenya over a lack of support for its content moderators.



Governance

Governance involves engaging citizens and creating policies that prioritise their needs. It is important to understand models that leverage and maximise citizens' engagement and participation in decision-making. FLIA's work goes beyond state-centric approaches and regularly uses the lens of public authority to understand how governance and power operate in peoples' everyday lives across Africa.

Public Policy

Our work on policymaking capacity in Kenya investigates this process using a public authority lens. It expands the ongoing discussions around executive policymaking models and theories, and the role of international development actors in policy change in Africa. This study investigates the evidence systems, norms, and innovations of the legislative policymaking processes and their outcomes in improving different policy designs.



Humanitarianism

FLIA has done extensive work on humanitarianism, working in South Sudan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda. However, the Institute has also expanded its work to countries beyond Africa and has undertaken comparative work on other continents. The International Norms project compared fundamental rights and freedoms currently protected under the Afghan Constitution with Islamic teachings, traditions, and texts. This included examining how such rights were negotiated in other political transitions in Muslim majority societies and how methods of Islamic peacebuilding can be applied to conflicts. Upon the completion of the project, the researchers published *The Guide to Peacebuilding Using Islamic Principles*, written for peace-makers, policymakers, and diplomats. The guide explores important commonalities between Islamic principles and internationally recognised standards concerning the laws of war, good governance, and inclusive peace-making.



Teaching and Knowledge Exchange

This year, FLIA has expanded its teaching and knowledge exchange programmes to bring our latest research to students and professionals working at LSE and around the world.

Assistant Professor Dr Robtel Neajai Pailey ran a one-month intercollegiate short course with four Monrovia-based universities in Liberia. The course was designed for postgraduate and advanced undergraduate students and comprised of eight seminars focused on Dr Pailey's award-winning monograph, *Development, (Dual) Citizenship and Its Discontents in Africa: The Political Economy of Belonging to Liberia*. The partnership will serve as a foundation for future research collaboration and staff and student exchanges between LSE and institutions in Monrovia.



Communication and influencing specialists, Dr Duncan Green and Dr Tom Kirk, partnered with the G20 Global Land Initiative, part of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, to run the week-long masterclass 'Strategic Communication of Land Restoration' hosted at LSE. The course was designed for early-career journalists, communication professionals, and social media influencers to enhance their ability to communicate effectively about land restoration and the risks of desertification. The course was the first of its kind at FLIA and has opened new paths to communicate scientific findings to the public.



FLIA led the delivery of the Contemporary African Politics training programme for the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office officials working in or with Africa. It was run in partnership with the Office's Africa Research Group, to enhance civil servants' understanding of contemporary political and social issues in Africa.

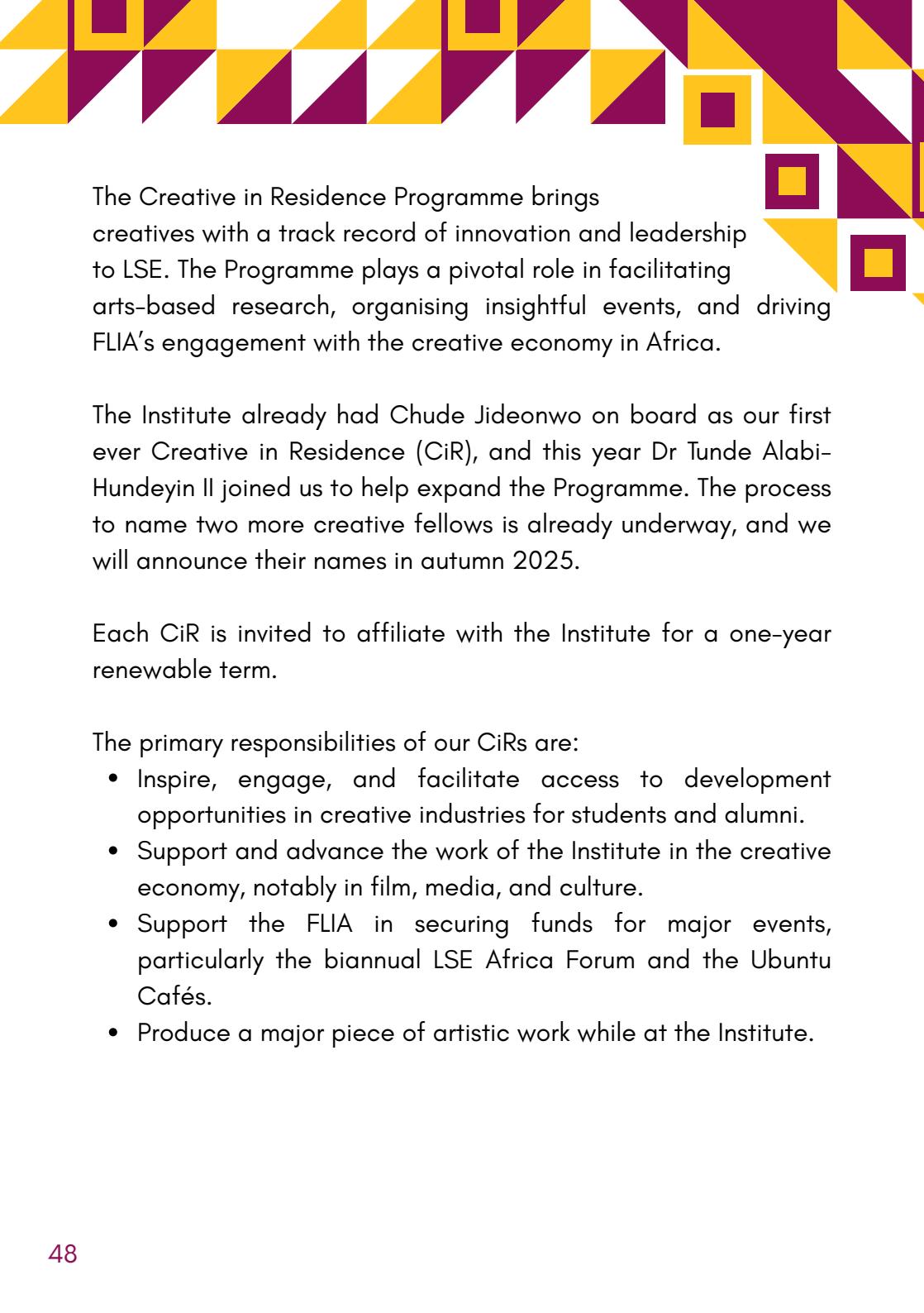
During 2024-25, a new course on Trade Policy and Development was introduced as an elective in the School of Public Policy's Master of Public Administration and Master of Public Policy programmes at LSE.

In spring 2026, FLIA will be hosting an 'Impact Masterclass' covering why and how researchers can integrate impact into the entire research cycle, from research question and design to knowledge exchange and dissemination. The course will be taught by Dr Duncan Green and Dr Tom Kirk.





Creative Industries at FLIA



The Creative in Residence Programme brings creatives with a track record of innovation and leadership to LSE. The Programme plays a pivotal role in facilitating arts-based research, organising insightful events, and driving FLIA's engagement with the creative economy in Africa.

The Institute already had Chude Jideonwo on board as our first ever Creative in Residence (CiR), and this year Dr Tunde Alabi-Hundeyin II joined us to help expand the Programme. The process to name two more creative fellows is already underway, and we will announce their names in autumn 2025.

Each CiR is invited to affiliate with the Institute for a one-year renewable term.

The primary responsibilities of our CiRs are:

- Inspire, engage, and facilitate access to development opportunities in creative industries for students and alumni.
- Support and advance the work of the Institute in the creative economy, notably in film, media, and culture.
- Support the FLIA in securing funds for major events, particularly the biannual LSE Africa Forum and the Ubuntu Cafés.
- Produce a major piece of artistic work while at the Institute.



Chude Jideonwo, FLIA's first Creative in Residence

Chude Jideonwo is a renowned media entrepreneur and co-founder of RED For Africa. As Creative in Residence, Chude has leveraged his extensive expertise and creativity to engage with the Programme for African Leadership and support the Ubuntu Café events series.

Through his work with the Programme for African Leadership, Chude has helped support the development of future African creative leaders. His vast experience in film and media has been instrumental in enhancing creative opportunities for LSE students and establishing the programme.



Dr Tunde Alabi-Hundeyin II, Creative in Residence

Dr Tunde Alabi-Hundeyin II is a documentary filmmaker and media creative whose work interrogates culture, identity, power, and social justice. He holds a PhD in Creative and Critical Practice from the University of Sussex, and his acclaimed films and photo exhibitions have been displayed globally. His work inspires dialogue on African agency, ethical storytelling, and impactful advocacy through photography and film.



Events



Africa Rising Symposium 2025

The Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa partnered with EMY Africa to host the Africa Rising Symposium, convening leaders across business, policy, and creative sectors under the theme 'Beyond Potential: Africa's Age of Performance.' This second annual edition followed a companion event at New York University and went beyond aspirational narratives by spotlighting tangible African accomplishments and systemic challenges.

"We must foster a genuine culture of partnership and collaboration; only then will we see results that are truly mutually beneficial." Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP.



Film Screening and Discussion

FLIA hosted a screening and discussion of *Is It Your Money? The Diezani Alison-Madueke Story* with Chude Jideonwo, who produced the film. Part of a four-part investigative docuseries, the film examines the rise and fall of Nigeria's former petroleum minister and first female president of OPEC. It explores allegations of corruption through exclusive interviews with investigators from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, London's Metropolitan Police Force, and Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.



Programme for African Leadership



This year, the Programme for African Leadership (PfAL) strengthened its position as the pioneering university leadership programme for African students in the UK. It graduated its 14th cohort and expanded its alumni network to over 1,000 leaders from 40 countries.

Exclusively available to graduate students from Africa and the diaspora, the programme provides an extra-curricular space for leadership development, networking, and debate.

Those who enrol are invited to attend a structured series of activities and events throughout the academic year, including career days, leadership seminars, and socials.

PfAL students also contribute to the organisation of the annual LSE Africa Summit, ensuring the programme continues to be a bridge between scholarship and practice.

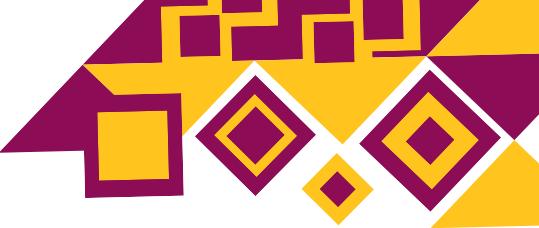




Programme Components

- PfAL hosts the Ubuntu Café as part of our annual Africa Day and Black History Month celebrations, which attract hundreds of guests from across LSE and beyond.
- PfAL Debates has expanded into the popular Inter-University Africa Debates, connecting students across the UK to contribute to critical conversations and policies affecting Africa. The debates promote fresh perspectives and discourses while developing participants' critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills.
- Alternative concepts of leadership are investigated in workshops delivered by Dr Vanessa Iwovo, FLIA Visiting Senior Fellow and Senior Lecturer at Birkbeck University; Dr Souad Mohamed, FLIA Visiting Senior Fellow; and Ronak Gopaldas, FLIA Visiting Fellow and political economist. The value of Ubuntu is critical to these workshops. The principle of "I am because we are" promotes an ethos of inclusive, collaborative leadership. It is used by the programme to guide discussion around what effective forms of leadership mean in different contexts.
- The Unleash Africa Projects are an opportunity for students to design feasible African-centred solutions (product or service) to a problem in Africa with a view to pitching a viable social venture. Mapped to the African Union's youth priority areas, students develop project management, problem solving, entrepreneurial, and communication skills with the potential of acquiring funding to make their vision a reality.

Highlights of 2025/2026



We were delighted to announce the appointment of Lord Boateng as the second Patron of PfAL, strengthening our commitment to leadership excellence and advocacy for African voices.

Lord Boateng was the first person of African descent to serve in the British Cabinet. He is a former UK High Commissioner to South Africa and was appointed as a member of the House of Lords in 2010.

This year, PfAL held the first Futures Forum. It brought together professionals and students across different leadership programmes at LSE and beyond for dialogues and collaboration that resulted in the publication of four white papers.



The programme launched a PfAL Newsletter on LinkedIn and reached 1,000 subscribers in its first six months. It amplifies the voices, research, and initiatives of PfAL students and alumni to a global audience.

PfAL students partnered with the Africa Business Club at Imperial College London to represent Team London vs Team Oxbridge and won the Inter-University Africa Debate at the Cambridge Africa Conference.

Our alumni have been equally proactive as PfAL collaborated with Duke University and the University of Ghana for the first 'Elections and Economics Dialogue Series,' which convened policy discussions on Africa's democratic and economic futures.

Co-creating with stakeholders continues to be central to the Programme's mission as it partners with Ennovate Ventures to support African founders through incubation and funding.

PfAL secured a successful grant for the Melting Pot initiative from the LSE Race and Equity Fund, now in implementation, which creates spaces for students to co-design solutions to promote community and belonging at the School.

Looking Ahead

New Forums and Retreats

The first-ever PfAL Retreat will take place in 2026, designed as a leadership event to convene PfAL students and the UK-based alumni network.

The PfAL Forum, our flagship event, will be held on the continent in late 2026.

Expanding Learning Opportunities

PfAL successfully piloted the 'Emerging Leadership Masterclass' with All Round Leadership Learning System, which will be rolled out to partner high schools across Africa in 2026. This marks the beginning of PfAL's investment in building a pipeline of young African leaders even before they reach LSE.

Alumni Network

The PfAL Network now includes over 1,000 alumni from 40 African countries, united by a shared leadership code and a commitment to social justice, intellectualism, and positive impact.

PfAL Testimonials

"PfAL has been like a home to me. I felt safe, comfortable, and loved by everyone."

"PfAL taught me a lot about my leadership abilities and the type of impact I want to leave in the world and in Africa."

"I met some incredible people from all over the continent, and I'm certain that going into the future, I've made lifelong connections."



Public Engagement

The LSE Africa Summit is one of the largest student-led conferences in Europe. It offers a unique space for scholars, policymakers, and business leaders to discuss issues that shape the continent's future.



In 2025, the Summit's theme, 'Securing Africa's Future: Promoting Resilience in a Divided World', took on heightened relevance in a rapidly changing global order marked by shifting trade dynamics, climate change, and economic dependencies. Through thought-provoking sessions, expert-led discussions, and interactive workshops, the Summit highlighted Africa's potential to drive innovative solutions and foster resilience. This year, our speakers included Professor Luis Gabriel Franceschi, Assistant Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations; Professor Kingsley Moghalu, the inaugural President of the African School of Governance; and Dr Vera Songwe, Founder of the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility and former United Nations Under-Secretary General.

Hosted by the Department of Geography and Environment and FLIA, a panel discussed Professor Claire Mercer's new book, *The Suburban Frontier: Middle Class Construction in Dar es Salaam*. It examines how self-built housing on the urban periphery has become central to middle-class formation and urban transformation in contemporary Tanzania and beyond.



FLIA held the book launch of Dr Elizabeth Ngutuku's new book, *Children's Lived Experience of Poverty and Vulnerability in Kenya: Going Beyond Multi-dimensionality*, chaired by FLIA Professor in Practice, Dr Kevin Watkins. The book sheds light on how children perceive and navigate poverty, often in ways overlooked by traditional development frameworks.



'Empire & Exploitation: The Role of Imperialism & Capitalism' in Africa traced the lingering shadows of colonial power across Africa. The event underscored the Institute's commitment to tackling difficult historical and political questions while providing a platform for rigorous debate on Africa's position in the global order. The speakers were Professor Ray Bush, Emeritus Professor of African Studies and Development Politics, University of Leeds; Fiona Lali, Campaigns Coordinator, Revolutionary Communist Party; and Dr Daniel Mulugeta, Lecturer in International Politics of Africa & Chair, Centre for Pan-African Studies, SOAS.

This year, LSE alumnus and recipient of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, Professor James A. Robinson, shared his interpretation of the trajectories of African society, history, politics, and economic based on the notion of wealth in people and its institutionalisations at a public event held on campus.



FLIA co-hosted the 'Mainstreaming Nature Positive Economics for People and Planet' event with the CEO of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Beccy Speight, chaired by Dr Simon Dikau. In the run-up to COP16, the panel explored where we are, what is working, and what needs to change. It drew on the panel's policy expertise and knowledge of global nature conservation of species and habitats.



FLIA co-hosted 'The Future of Conservation in Africa' with Tusk Trust. Chaired by Dr Martha Geiger Mwenitete, the event focused on the opportunity to change this trajectory to recalibrate our relationship with animals and the environment. The 2024 Tusk Conservation Award winners were on the panel: Edward Aruna (Sierra Leone), Claver Ntoyinkima (Rwanda), and Nomba Ganamé (Mali). Dr Susan Canney and Dr Kate Evans also joined the discussion, sharing inspiring, practical solutions shaping the future of African conservation.



As part of the LSE Festival, FLIA, in collaboration with LSE Press, held the book launch for Dr David Luke's new book, *How Africa Eats*. Chaired by Dr Laura Mann, Professor Luke was in conversation with Adejoké "Joké" Bakare a British Nigerian-born chef specialising in West African cuisine; Dipo Faloyin, the author of *Africa Is Not a Country*; and Edwini Kwame Kessie, director of the Agriculture and Commodities Division at the World Trade Organization.



FLIA and the Centre for Women, Peace and Security host a weekly seminar series to showcase their work. The seminars are open to staff and master's students from across LSE and beyond. This year, we've held talks by Caroline Kende Robb and Walter Odhiambo from the African Development Bank, Dougie Peedle from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and Professor Maysoon Dahab from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. LSE's Dr Matthew Sterling Benson, and Yousra Abdelmoneim from PwC, presented current research on Sudan and its ongoing conflict, amongst a host of other speakers.

Blog highlights

The Africa@LSE blog offers insight and analysis on the key issues affecting Africa from leading academics at LSE and beyond. The blog is a world-leading platform for the dissemination of research on Africa that broadens the audience for social science research and increases the impact of academic scholarship.

Our articles have been reposted and cited on news outlets around the world, have led to research collaborations, and have supported grant applications. As a direct result of publishing on the blog, our authors have been interviewed by leading media organisations and called to advise embassies and international organisations around the world.

Top five most read articles:



Hub for African Thought

The Hub for African Thought is our digital showcase of the wide reaching, and transformative contributions of African academics to global knowledge production.

The Hub features profiles of canonical thinkers, Q&As with current researchers, and curated Reading Lists on subjects from AI to post-colonial theory, solely comprised of African authors. We currently have seven profiles, eight Q&As, and 11 reading lists available for you.

Since it was launched in 2024, the Hub has attracted over 24,000 readers. The most popular section so far has been our thinkers profiles, with the articles on Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, and Wangari Maathai being the most read this year.



FLIA in Numbers



The year ahead

The coming year will be a special one as the Institute celebrates its ten-year anniversary in 2026. In honour of this achievement, FLIA will be highlighting the many dynamic thinkers who have contributed to the intellectual life of the Institute, as well as the leaders and change makers who have spent time at FLIA.

As part of the Institute's ten-year anniversary, the Programme for African Leadership will showcase its alumni who are making a positive impact and are leading with determination, creativity, and empathy across the continent.

The Institute's success could not have been possible without LSE alum, Firoz Lalji, who has recognised the incredible promise of future generations of African leaders to create positive change. The Institute is truly grateful for his generosity and for creating a new space for us in the Firoz Lalji Global Hub at 35 Lincoln's Inn Fields. FLIA is also grateful for the efforts of all our staff, students, partners, supporters, and alumni over the past ten years in driving inclusivity, discovery, and placing Africa at the heart of LSE. FLIA will be hosting an anniversary event in May 2026 to celebrate the Institute's achievements over the last ten years, and we hope to see you there.



**Dr Martha Geiger
Mwenitete,
Interim Director and
Assistant
Professorial
Research Fellow**

35 Lincoln's Inn Fields

FLIA will soon move into 35 Lincoln's Inn Fields, the centrepiece of which will be the Agora, a new a unique events venue at the heart of LSE. The space will be filled with 2,700 ceramic cowrie shells designed by Kenyan visual artist Magdelene Obundo.

The cowrie shell holds an important place in African culture. It is made into jewellery, sewn into garments, and used in religious rituals.

Odundo will abstract the cowrie shell's natural form while still honouring its motif by working with ceramicists in Stoke-on-Trent to produce the individual elements that will be suspended above the agora.

Magdalene Oundo was born in Kenya in 1950. She moved to the UK in 1971 and studied at the Cambridge School of Art, the Royal College of Art, and the University of Creative Arts, where she was appointed chancellor in 2019. She was made a Dame in the Queen's New Year's Honours list in 2020.



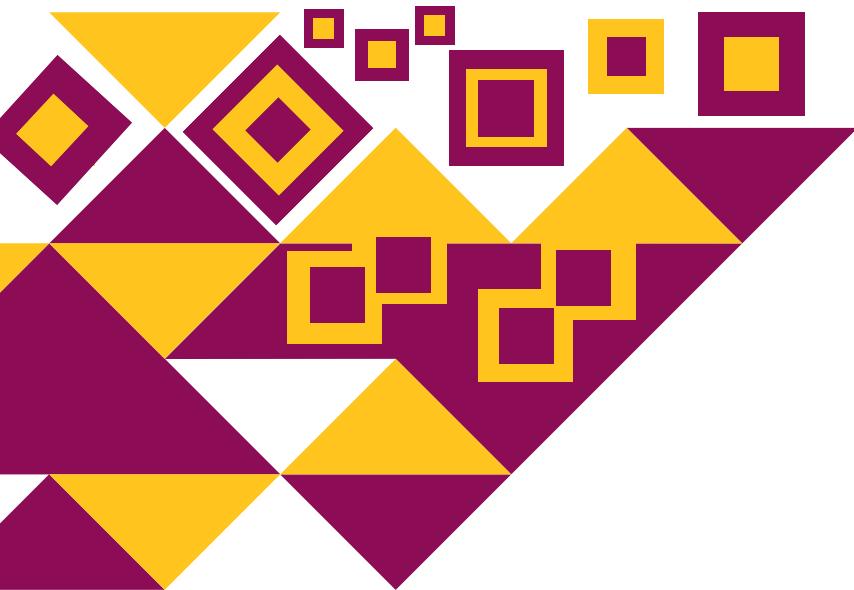
Picture courtesy of David Copperfield Architects

Get involved

Since its founding in 2016, the Institute has grown into a global convening space for rigorous research, creative collaboration, and impactful dialogue on Africa's place in the world.

As we look to the next decade, our ambition is to expand our impact even further. Our anniversary year will serve as a platform to celebrate past achievements and to chart new directions in research, policy, and creative practice.

The anniversary will be an opportunity to reaffirm the Institute's founding commitment: to centre Africa as a vital site of knowledge, creativity, and global leadership. Together with our partners and community, we look forward to the next decade of ideas, dialogue, and impact.



How to Get Involved

Collaboration: FLIA is always looking for new collaborators. Partnering on research projects, joint events, and policy dialogues that advance Africa-focused inquiry and practice can help make a real difference to important issues.

Mentorship: By sharing your professional expertise with LSE students and early-career scholars through structured mentoring and exchange, you can help support their career ambitions and growth.

Support: Financial sustainability is vital for continuing FLIA's programming and to sustain scholarships, fellowships, and research that amplify African voices and perspectives.

Participation: By attending public events, lectures, and creative showcases, you can add your voice to the conversations that matter.

Storytelling: There is no single narrative about events or places. Contributing reflections, analysis, case studies, or creative work that captures the evolving relationship between Africa, its people, places, and the world at large increases the diversity and impact of our work.

Supporters & Funders

The Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa wishes to thank all our supporters who have donated to our programmes, attended our events, or engaged with our work. We look forward to working with you all again next year as the Institute celebrates its 10-year anniversary.

Supporters

- Firoz Lalji (BSc Economics in 1969)
- Jules Green (BSc Management Studies in 1985) and Susan Green
- Dr Burkart Varnholt
- Pii Ketvel (LLM 1995) and Dr Gisella Ketvel (MSc European Studies in 1995)
- Lata Krishnan Shah (BSc in Economics in 1981)



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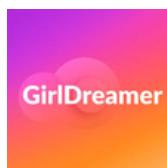
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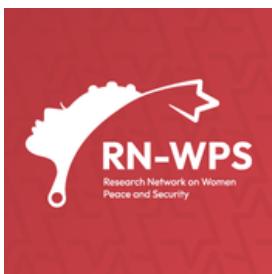


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