



Firoz Lalji Institute  
for Africa

# Strategic Plan Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa

2023-2026



## Inspiring the Future: A message from FLIA leadership

“The release of our three-year strategy makes clear FLIA’s commitment to research agendas that draw together colleagues from across LSE and beyond. Our strategy also shows how we will increase our outreach and communication activities, expand our teaching work, and enhance our support for African colleagues in London and across Africa. We aim to make Africa an ever more central part of LSE and invite everyone to participate in our rewarding and exciting journey.”



**Professor Tim Allen,**  
Institute Director



**Martha Geiger Mwenitete,**  
Chair of Strategic Development  
Institute Manager

“We are thrilled to release our three-year strategy that aims to centre Africa in LSE’s research, teaching, and engagement commitments. The Institute is becoming a hub and platform for under-represented voices to share their perspectives and experiences in global debates. We invite you to take a look at our strategic aims and join our community to help us bring our goals to fruition.”

## Vision

The Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA) aims to place Africa at the heart of LSE and to be a hub for working with under-represented voices in and beyond Africa to bring their perspectives to global debates.

## Mission

**Placing Africa at the heart of LSE** requires engagement with African scholars, students, thought leaders, professionals, policymakers, and activists, to foreground African perspectives on matters affecting African countries and beyond. FLIA will work with departments to ensure the inclusion of African perspectives in debates, events, initiatives, and public forums at LSE.



## Guiding Principles

These guiding principles are aspirations intended to advance our institution's values and help facilitate a shared understanding of how initiatives are prioritised and actualised.

- The Institute will be the home for research on Africa at the LSE.
- Drive transformative research and creative work through internal and external relationship building, support for innovation, and focus on impact.
- Create enriching learning environments and research opportunities for LSE staff and students.
- Promote new analytic frameworks and forge new research directions with the FLIA research programme, including the Centre for Women, Peace and Security.
- Engage a diverse academic, professional services, and student body.
- Support interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary connections and collaborations in research, teaching, and policymaking.
- Include the perspectives of those rarely heard and provide a forum where critical debate can occur in places and with people who are often not included in global discussions.



## Achieving Our Vision

The Institute will address pressing issues affecting Africa and beyond, including poverty and inequality, economic transformation, governance, law, demographics, climate change, gender inequalities, technology, conservation, and public health. FLIA is committed to understanding African aspirations for a peaceful, prosperous continent and to understanding the social upheavals, environmental issues, political challenges, and humanitarian crises affecting some populations in Africa and more globally.

The Institute will also highlight and celebrate the successes and innovations happening across the continent and in the diaspora. FLIA will explore how these successes came to fruition and what can be learned from them.



The Institute will provide a forum for a range of voices and perspectives, where critical debates can occur in places and with people who do not usually have access to a wider audience. The Institute has become a conduit for engagement with Africa and under-represented voices across LSE.

The Institute aims to increase its programming and presence on the African continent by strengthening its existing partnerships with African institutions and international organisations, such as the African Union (AU), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and UN Women.

FLIA is committed to forging new relationships with institutions and centres of academic and policy excellence focused on Africa, located in Africa and beyond, to enhance the impact of our research outputs, publications, and events. Through its external board, FLIA will drive external engagement that supports the Institute to achieve its ambitious aims.



## Innovative Research Programmes

**FLIA is different from other academic centres and institutes that research Africa. Our research agenda transcends area studies. It aims to develop research on Africa in a wider comparative context reflective of the way other regions are studied at LSE. This makes FLIA different to other Africa centres at other universities in the UK and Europe that present themselves as centres of excellence in area studies.**

**FLIA will work with academic and professional services colleagues to secure funding for research focused on Africa and other regions to co-develop new research projects in partnership with African and international institutions.**

FLIA is committed to co-designing research agendas with African partners and partners from elsewhere to lead policy discussions and developments focused on trade and economies, public authority, politics, climate change, arts and culture, public health, humanitarianism, environmental issues, and women, peace, and security. The Institute has been and will continue to expand its geographical focus outside of Africa and apply its learnings from research in Africa to other settings.

**FLIA will host the Centre for Women, Peace and Security to develop new research streams focusing on women and gender dynamics in Africa and elsewhere.**

These will address pressing issues related to the protection of vulnerable groups in conflict, widening participation in peacebuilding, co-joining human rights with gender, empowerment, and preventing sexual violence. All of which will be underpinned by a commitment to producing robust comparative academic research relevant to policymakers.

FLIA will create new research streams by successfully securing research grants from UK research councils and other major funding bodies.



## Championing Academic Talent

Through the development of new research streams, FLIA hopes to **increase its research team from twelve to twenty-five staff members.**

**The Institute aims to offer two funded African Fellowships per year to social science researchers from African universities.** The Fellows will be in residence at the Institute to develop collaborations, teaching, and research opportunities.

To support LSE's strategy of championing equity, diversity, and inclusion, **FLIA will work with academic departments and staff to raise funding for further fellowships for African scholars and scholars working on Africa,** and to recruit, promote, develop, and retain exceptional talent. FLIA events will prioritise voices from places in Africa and elsewhere that are often not platformed.

In this spirit, FLIA will offer **five visiting fellowships to African and under-represented scholars** who would like to affiliate with the Institute and co-develop research grant applications with the Institute and LSE academics, deliver guest seminars, and participate in public events, such as the widely attended Africa Summit that FLIA hosts at LSE every year.

**FLIA will continue to collaborate with academics and PhD students across LSE departments** through the co-development and delivery of seminars, research projects, conferences, public events, and student-led initiatives.

This work will bring together scholars interested in Africa and WPS to enable cross-fertilisation of ideas and apply new learnings and perspectives to a range of disciplines.





## Supporting Students

### The Programme for African Leadership

In line with LSE's 2030 strategy, FLIA has built a School-wide community that fosters belonging and co-creation through the Programme for African Leadership (PfAL).

PfAL connects African Masters students from across LSE through extra-curricular programming to inspire students to be agents of change within their cohorts, professions, and communities.

To maintain momentum after graduation, PfAL runs an alumni network for all PfAL graduates called 'PfAL Connect' to facilitate networking and friendships among the different cohorts of the PfAL alumni.

### Inspiring Student Innovation

Each year, drawing on existing and new funding, FLIA will offer to students from Africa and/or any student engaged in work related to Africa:

- Three external or internal internships
- Ten MSc research assistantships with LSE faculty
- Three research prizes for MSc students
- One PhD student competition for seed funding for research
- Increased PfAL cohorts from 80 to 100 and a Career Readiness Workshop and a Career Lab
- Opportunities at FLIA and across LSE to PfAL alumni to increase retention of talent at the Institute and the School.



## Career Development

The Institute will provide one Career Readiness Workshop and a Career Transition Lab each year and seek partnerships and sponsorship with prospective employers to offer career opportunities, leadership forums, and career days for PfAL students and the PfAL graduate network. These programmes will be supported by partnerships with regional institutions such as the AU, UNECA, and AfDB, as well as recruitment firms specialising in African job markets.

## Scholarships

LSE has committed to the goal of offering one hundred African scholarships per year. FLIA will work tirelessly with colleagues, partners, and philanthropists to raise funds for one hundred African Masters scholarships over the next three years to give opportunities to promising young African scholars. Moreover, the Institute will pursue fundraising for PhD scholarships for African post-graduate students who want to engage in further graduate work.

## The Future

By 2026, FLIA will have a new hub at 35 Lincoln Inn Fields where the LSE Agora will be located. The bespoke space will support the implementation of this strategic plan by offering a unique space to hold events, seminars, and debates. The space will also be used to celebrate African culture, music, art, fashion, and cuisine. We hope colleagues, students, partners, and prospective partners will join us in our efforts to **place Africa at the heart of LSE**.





## Annex: Investing in the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa

To help us fulfil our vision for the expansion of the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa, we are eager to collaborate with different individuals and organisations who share our ambitions.

Philanthropic partners and like-minded collaborators can engage with the Institute's aspirations by becoming a part of the Institute's journey to reach its strategic goals. This includes furthering work on African trade, governance, humanitarianism, public health, public policy, and the environment. The expansion of the work of the Centre for Women, Peace and Security and the African Engagement Programme are other key priorities. The Institute also aims to support more African scholars to pursue advanced studies at LSE and appoint a Chair in African Development to increase research and teaching on Africa at the School.

If you are interested in exploring partnerships with the Institute, please get in touch.





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to learn more about FLIA





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for Africa**



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