

# Annual Report 2019-2020



# Contents

Our year in review . . . . . 1

My AfOx Story . . . . . 2

Focus on Research Africa (FORA) . . . . . 3

Developing academic networks . . . . . 4

Strengthening emerging collaborations. . . . . 6

Advancing the frontiers of Research Leadership . . . . . 8

Supporting world-class training for African graduates . . . . . 9

AfOx Events. . . . . 13

Knowledge Exchange. . . . . 14

Communications . . . . . 16

Thank you . . . . . 17

Looking to the future . . . . . 18



**“Research has the power to transform our world. Research makes the seemingly impossible possible. Research is the game changer for a more peaceful and prosperous society, and research will also help us conserve our planet”**

**Arumna Oteh**, Academic Scholar, University of Oxford and Former Vice President & Treasurer, World Bank, speaking at the inaugural AfOx FORA Conference 2019.

# Our year in review

## Africa is one of the most rapidly changing continents whose future demographic and economic growth will have a major influence globally

This year the AfOx annual report celebrates the incredible AfOx Fellows and Travel Grant recipients who have initiated new collaborations to achieve advances in health and biological sciences, physics, mathematics, social sciences and the humanities. We commend African students in Oxford who whilst undertaking their graduate degrees are addressing a range of challenges and opportunities in the continent and paving the way for more African students to study at Oxford.

Our annual report also highlights the events we have hosted in the last year, updates on our flagship programmes and gives a glimpse of new programmes starting next year.

Since our establishment in 2016, we have supported academic and research excellence by facilitating equitable collaborations between researchers based in African institutions and the University of Oxford.

The last year has seen expansion of the AfOx network and research partnership schemes. The AfOx family has grown

to over 2300 members across the UK and in various African countries. Over 300 Oxford-based researchers and 300 Africa-based academics have signed up to our researcher database to share ideas, knowledge and expertise with each other. We awarded the 200th AfOx Travel Grant in February 2020. Nineteen distinguished African researchers from 12 countries spent the summer in Oxford via the AfOx Visiting Fellows Programme. Our flagship events, the AfOx insakas and the AfOx FORA provided a platform for hundreds of researchers and students to discuss and debate all things Africa in Oxford.

We are a cross-university participatory network, and encourage everyone in Oxford with an interest in Africa and African researchers interested in collaborating with Oxford to get in touch with us.

We will continue to work in the coming years to build on what we have achieved so far, expand our key programmes, and work with colleagues across Oxford to develop a University-wide strategy to increase the number of African students studying at Oxford and support the vision of making Africa a strategic priority for Oxford. We will also continue to work with our partners in African institutions to develop avenues for research capacity sharing.



## My AfOx Story: The power of an idea

### In 1959, Ghanaian philosopher William Abraham became the first African Prize Scholar at All Souls College, Oxford.

Nearly 60 years later Dr. Caesar Atuire, a fellow Ghanaian philosopher was awarded an AfOx Visiting Fellowship hosted at All Souls College in 2018. Following his successful Fellowship, he was invited back as an All Souls Visiting Fellow to spend 6 months in Oxford in 2020.

Caesar Atuire started studying for a degree in Engineering in 1986. During this period, Caesar realised that he was more interested in the 'why' rather than the 'how'. For him, philosophy became a way to understand the why of things and the reason behind them.

Caesar is now a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Philosophy and Classics at the University of Ghana, where he teaches students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. His research interests include bioethics, politics of development in Africa and personhood in philosophy.

Talking about why he chose to teach and study philosophy, Caesar explains



**"It is the power of an idea. It excites me to see how ideas evolve from being concepts in our head, to action, which then transform lives. Philosophy gives us the capacity to think critically and find organic and constructive solutions to problems at a theoretical level and then assimilate thought to perception."**

In 2018, Caesar visited Oxford for 6 weeks as an AfOx Visiting Fellow. He worked in collaboration with colleagues in the Department of Psychiatry and the Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities to study attitudes that inform the way people perceive mental health in West Africa.

During the course of the Fellowship Caesar created a culturally attuned framework of bioethical concepts to address complex challenges facing the understanding and treatment of people with mental disorders in Ghana.

Caesar is particularly passionate about exploring context-based solutions to problems and translating his research into results.



**"We cannot always import solutions from the western world. We need to go back into African philosophy. However, the idea of going back to African philosophy is not about closing in on ourselves but offering an African voice to the global discourse."**

After completing the AfOx Fellowship in 2018, he published a book titled '[Bioethics in Africa](#)'. The book offers diverse theoretical and practical perspectives on bioethical challenges that are common in sub-Saharan Africa. In an effort to translate his ideas to action, he is now working on a programme to train healthcare workers in bioethics.



**"Africa is a continent of young people. If we are able to empower these young persons, then we can look forward to a bright future. The empowerment I would like to contribute is intellectual, cultural and moral- hence my commitment to academic life."**

Caesar also extends his principal of finding context-based solutions to [Amicus Onlus](#), a NGO that he founded in the year 2003. Amicus Onlus engages with communities across Ghana to conduct needs analysis to identify solutions to problems faced by young people. Amicus Onlus engages with about 30,000 people across Ghana every year, working on projects such as skill training for youth, vocation training for single mothers and medical outreach programmes.

# Focus on Research in Africa



**“Maintain an emic perspective in the work you do in Africa. And that is being able to immerse yourself in the culture, understanding the importance of culture and being able to link that etic perspective with the emic perspective”**

**Prof. Dixon Chibanda**, Founder of the Friendship Bench and Director of the African Mental Health Research Initiative, speaking at the inaugural AfOx FORA Conference 2019



In May 2019, we launched the Focus on Research Africa (FORA) Conference. FORA provides a multidisciplinary platform for researchers and students across African countries and the UK to share ideas and solutions on a wide range of challenges and opportunities facing the continent.

Over 100 researchers and students attended the inaugural FORA Conference. FORA also provided a platform for African graduate students to showcase their research in the form of poster presentations.

Researchers and students shared their latest findings on health, machine learning, marine science, economics and sociology among others. A panel of research leaders deliberated on the challenges and opportunities in developing successful and equitable international research collaborations.

Founder of the Friendship Bench, Dixon Chibanda delivered the opening keynote address sharing his experience on research leadership on the African continent. Former Vice President of The World Bank & academic scholar at the University of Oxford, Arumna Oteah inspired the audience with the closing keynote address on the potential of research to transform the world.

You can view all the discussions that took place here: <http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk/africa-research-day/>



**“It was great to get questions and feedback on my work with wildlife rangers and elephant poaching in Zimbabwe. The comments and questions from people in completely different fields were particularly useful in helping me think about how best to communicate research to a wider audience.”**

**Timothy Kupier**, DPhil Candidate in Zoology, winner of the FORA poster competition



**“Many times when people are evaluating the outcome of collaborations they focus on product, like the number of paper published. However, it is also important to focus on the process behind the collaboration, the process of forming a consortia and the interactions between partners.”**

**Dr. Sam Kinyanjui**, Director - IDeAL & Head of Training, KEMRI Wellcome Trust Research Program



**“I am delivering a message to those who are based here in Oxford and to other UK institutions interested in transforming their classrooms. My role today is to introduce you to a framework to help achieve equality in your lab and classroom.”**

**Nomfundo Ramalekana**, DPhil Candidate in Law, University of Oxford

## Talks and speakers

### Leadership in Research

Dr. Dixon Chibanda, Director of the African Mental Health Research Initiative (AMARI), Associate Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Founder, Friendship Bench

### The Power of Research

Arumna Oteah, Academic Scholar, University of Oxford and Former Vice President & Treasurer, World Bank

### Simplifying viral disease diagnosis on the African Continent

Atherton Mutombwera, CEO at Hutano Diagnostics

### Vaccine co-development for humans and animals

Dr. George Warimwe, Associate Professor, Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford

### Race, gender and class in the lab and seminar room

Nomfundo Ramalekana, DPhil Law Student, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford

### Challenges for HBV elimination in Africa

Jolynne Mokaya, Doctoral Researcher, Nuffield Department of Medicine, University of Oxford

### Social capital - social connections across time, place and intent

Prof. Joy Owen, Global South Visiting Fellow - TORCH

### Using Conditional Inference Forests to Model Time to Event Data

Dr. Justine Nasejje, Lecturer, School of Statistics and Actuarial Science, University of the Witwatersrand

### Exploration of Seychelles Twilight Zone

Dr. Lucy Woodall, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford

### Successful research collaborations

Prof Lucy Cluver, Dr Caesar Atuire, Prof Garret Cotter, Dr Sam Kinyanjui, Dr Neo Tapela, Prof E.J. Milner-Gulland.



# Developing academic networks: AfOx Visiting Fellowship Programme

## The AfOx Visiting Fellowship Programme provides opportunities for growth and networking to outstanding African researchers

From developing an AI platform to preserve languages, studying the evolution of galaxies to solving partial differential equations via rational functions and reframing peace and conflict studies to assessing deep-sea ecosystems, the 2019 AfOx Visiting Fellows worked on a range of fascinating projects during their time in Oxford.

2019 saw great expansion of the AfOx Visiting Fellows Programme. Over 250 African researchers from 30 countries applied for the Fellowship, representing a three-fold increase from 2018 applications. We created new partnerships with Departments and Colleges across Oxford and selected 19 Fellows from 12 countries for the five AfOx Fellowship schemes.

The AfOx Visiting Fellowship Programme is designed to provide exceptional African researchers an opportunity to build international networks and focus on a project of their choice, away from teaching and administrative duties at their home institutions. Open to all research fields, the Fellowship supports researchers to spend up to 8 weeks at Oxford.

During their stay in Oxford, AfOx Fellows delivered seminars to share their work with academics and students across the University. For many Fellows, the Fellowship has resulted in receiving additional grants to build on their research, publication of papers and books and new research partnerships from departments and Colleges across Oxford and other universities.

During the Fellowship period, Fellows receive Senior Common Room rights at one of our partner Colleges as well as full access to the University's facilities such as labs and libraries. They collaborate with researchers based at the University of Oxford and have the opportunity to expand their academic networks.



**“This is our first collaboration with AfOx. We knew the reputation of AfOx as a really great partner to reach scholars in the African continent. We had funding for 1 Fellowship, but we received such a great response that offered the AfOx-TORCH Fellowships to 3 incredible African researchers”**

**Dr. Victoria McGuinness**, Head of Cultural Programming and Partnerships, Humanities Division

## Key activities during the Fellowship



**Research (experiments, literature reviews & data analysis)**



**Preparing book chapters and manuscripts**



**Delivering seminars and lectures**



**Attending conferences and expanding networks**



**Engaging with academics and students in Oxford**

## Key outcomes of the Fellowship



**Authorship of papers & manuscripts**



**Presentation of research at international conferences**



**Joint grant applications**



**Successful applications to other Fellowships**



**Joint supervision of graduate students**



**“My coming here is not just for myself but also to build up the young people that I mentor. Because now they can see there is so much they can do and go so far”**

**Salome Bukachi**, University of Nairobi, AfOx Collaborative Fellow



**“Brad being here for the last 4 weeks has really helped accelerate our research. All of us in the Physics department students and other researchers have benefitted from Brad's visit.”**

**Matt Jarvis**, Department of Astrophysics, University of Oxford



**“Three years ago, I found an unpublished memoir written by one of the pioneers of radio in Ghana. The Fellowship gave me an opportunity to write a paper based on the memoir. Now I am also working on writing a book on this subject.”**

**Audrey Gadzepko**, School of Information & Communication Studies, University of Ghana, AfOx-ASC Fellow



**“The opportunity to host Alem in St Hugh's last summer was especially valuable, giving me new insights into the practicalities of fieldwork and teaching in Ethiopia and a sustained period of time in which to discuss with him issues of common interest.”**

**Peter Mitchell**, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford

Meet  
our  
Fellows



**Dr. Meron Taye**  
**Institution:** Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia  
**Oxford affiliation:** School of Geography and the Environment, St. Edmund Hall  
**Research:** Large-scale climatic and oceanic variables that influence rainfall in the upper Awash basin and the inflow to the reservoir



**Prof. Salome Bukachi**  
**Institution:** University of Nairobi, Kenya  
**Oxford affiliation:** School of Geography and the Environment, Brasenose College  
**Research:** The gendered inequalities and violence associated with women and girls forced to collect water from distant sources when local water infrastructure fails



**Dr. Godwin Nchinda**  
**Institution:** The Chantal Biya International Reference Center for Research on the Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS, Cameroon  
**Oxford affiliation:** Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine, Christ Church College  
**Research:** Developing new forms of DNA and viral vectored vaccines to harness dendritic cells insitu



**Dr. Joel Modiri**  
**Institution:** University of Pretoria, South Africa  
**Oxford affiliation:** Faculty of Law, Lady Margaret Hall  
**Research:** Development of critical race theory in the South African jurisprudential context



**Dr. Eniola Boluwaduro**  
**Institution:** Redeemer's University, Nigeria  
**Oxford affiliation:** TORCH, All Souls College  
**Research:** Advice-Giving In Nigerian Doctor/Patient-Encounter



**Prof. Audrey Mbogho**  
**Institution:** Pwani University, Kenya  
**Oxford affiliation:** TORCH, Wadham College  
**Research:** Gathering Language Data Through Crowdsourcing With A Focus On Kidawida



**Dr. Aymar Bisoka**  
**Institution:** Catholic University of Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo  
**Oxford affiliation:** African Studies Centre, St Antony's College  
**Research:** Decolonizing Knowledge in Francophone Africa: Reframing Peace and Conflict Studies



**Jennifer Appoo**  
**Institution:** Seychelles Islands Foundation, Seychelles  
**Oxford affiliation:** Nekton Mission, Somerville College



**Dr. Augustino Mayai**  
**Institution:** University of Juba, South Sudan  
**Oxford affiliation:** Department of International Development, Brasenose College  
**Research:** An Evaluation of a Large-scale Health Investment in Eastern Africa



**Dr. Bradley Frank**  
**Institution:** South African Radio Astronomical Observatory  
**Oxford affiliation:** Department of Astrophysics, St Peter's College  
**Research:** Post-processing science analysis of images and intensive writing of MIGHTEE-HI drafts, focusing on galaxies, groups and high-redshift detections



**Dr. Vivienne Williams**  
**Institution:** University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa  
**Oxford affiliation:** Department of Zoology, All Souls College  
**Research:** African perspectives on cultural practices and wildlife trade in big cat conservation across southern Africa



**Dr. Siana Nkya**  
**Institution:** Dar es Salaam University, Tanzania  
**Oxford affiliation:** Department of Oncology, St Peter's College  
**Research:** Establish MinION DNA sequencing platform for Hemoglobinopathies for use in Tanzania



**Dr. Mourad Gridach**  
**Institution:** Ibn Zohr University, Morocco  
**Oxford affiliation:** Department of Computer Science, Wolfson College  
**Research:** Developing new model architecture to improve the accuracy of automated image segmentation and labelling of femur and cartilage tissue in MRI hip scan data



**Dr. Olusegun Titus**  
**Institution:** Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria  
**Oxford affiliation:** TORCH, Merton College  
**Research:** Musical Narratives on Oil Exploration, Land Degradation, (In)justice and (Dis)placement: in the Niger Delta of Nigeria



**Dr. Rebecca Asare**  
**Institution:** Nature Conservation Research Centre, Ghana  
**Oxford affiliation:** School of Geography and the Environment, St Cross College  
**Research:** The story of cocoa in Ghana: the social, economic and environmental evolution of Ghana's cocoa sector



**Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo**  
**Insitution:** University of Ghana, Ghana  
**Oxford affiliation:** African Studies Centre, St Antony's College  
**Research:** Microphone Battles: Wartime programming in the formative years of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation



**Dr. Alemseged Aleho**  
**Institution:** Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia  
**Oxford affiliation:** School of Archaeology, St Edmund Hall  
**Research:** The Later Stone Age of Southern Africa & the Archaeology of Hunter-Gatherers



**Dr. Vusi Magagula**  
**Institution:** University of Eswatini, Swaziland  
**Oxford affiliation:** Mathematical Institute, Jesus College  
**Research:** Solving partial differential equations via rational functions



**Sheena Talma**  
**Institution:** South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity, Seychelles  
**Oxford affiliation:** Nekton Mission, Somerville College

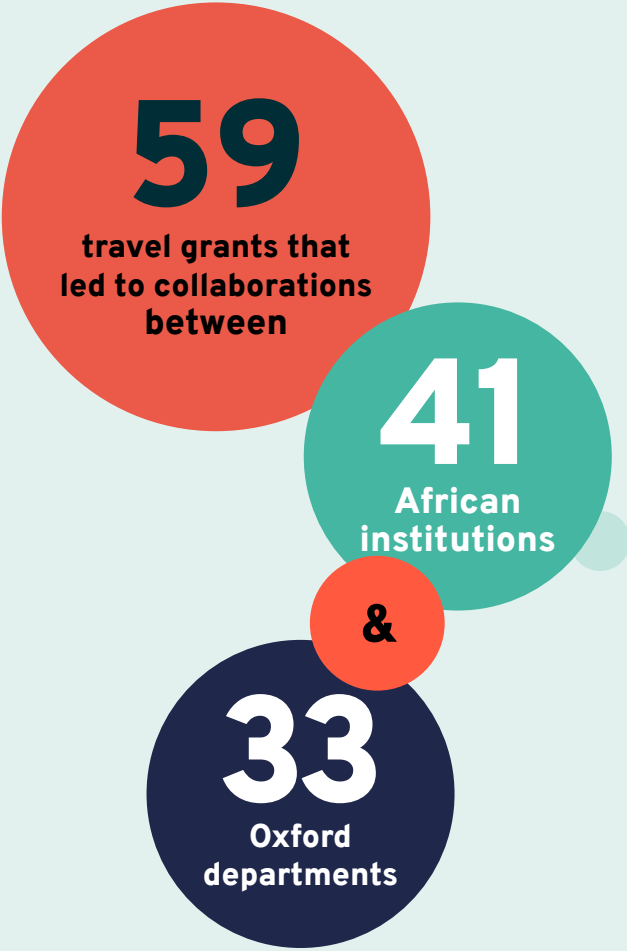


# Strengthening emerging collaborations: AfOx Travel Grants

The AfOx Travel Grants have supported over 200 research collaborations between researchers based in African institutions and the University of Oxford

Initiated with the aim of supporting new collaborations between researchers based in African institutions and the University of Oxford, the AfOx Travel Grants are open to all disciplines, all year round. They allow researchers to meet in either Oxford or an African institution to work together on an emerging research area of mutual interest.

In the last year, we awarded 59 travel grants that led to new research collaborations between 41 African institutions and 33 Oxford departments. Such collaborations have facilitated new advances in the fields of medical sciences, big data engineering, conserving environments and ecosystems, archaeology, and mathematical modelling amongst other fields.



## 200th Travel Grant: Extreme Longevity in Africa

### Collaborators

Monde B. Makiwane, Centre of Excellence in Human Development, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

George Leeson, Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, University of Oxford

### Collaborative approach

Monde and George applied for the AfOx Travel Grant to extend their study on factors that contribute to longevity in Africa. Estimated at 43 million in 2010, the population of elderly people in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to reach 67 million by 2025 and 163 million by 2050. The project aims to examine factors that contribute to longevity in Africa.

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Completion of literature review
- Production of a conceptual note on: “Individuals who survived two global pandemics that are a century apart”
- Developing a detailed plan for a study on longevity in Africa



## Economic sanctions and academia: Overlooked impact and long-term consequences



### Collaborators

Ola Karrar, Department of Statistics, University of Khartoum, Sudan

Louise Bezuidenhout, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford

### Collaborative approach

Ola and Louise first met each other at a Research Data Management summer school in Trieste, Italy. Upon realising their shared interest in Open Data, Ola and Louise applied for an AfOx Travel Grant to explore the impact that financial sanctions have on Sudanese academia.

The AfOx Travel Grant supported Ola to travel to Oxford to co-author a paper with Louise, who then made a follow-up trip to Khartoum to conduct a series of workshops on the impact of international sanctions on African academia.

### Outcomes

- Survey on current challenges within Sudanese academia and preferences for future targeted interventions
- 3 seminars at the University of Khartoum to feedback the findings of the survey involving university staff and students, governmental stakeholders and business entrepreneurs
- Co-authorship of a paper titled Economic sanctions and academia: Overlooked impact and long-term consequences



**“We are in a period of great transitions on all aspects of higher education; from teaching and learning to research and community engagement. Effective collaboration across disciplines and regions to address global challenges will keep academic and research institutions relevant in a rather uncertain future.**

**Dr. Anne Makena**, Programme Coordinator, AfOx



# Advancing the frontiers of Research Leadership

## Tackling major challenges and building sustainable partnerships depend on a continuous exchange of knowledge and ideas

Following the success of the Travel Grants and AfOx Fellowships, we launched three new programmes to facilitate long-term engagement between researchers and provide AfOx alumni the opportunity to build on ideas developed during their initial interactions.

### Sustaining research collaborations AfOx Research Development Awards

The AfOx Research Development Awards are a competitive pump-priming fund aimed at supporting previous Travel Grant recipients and Visiting Fellows to stimulate larger collaborative projects that will strengthen Africa-Oxford partnerships and make the collaborating partners competitive for future major awards.

### Ideas into action AfOx Research Impact and Engagement Acceleration

The AfOx Research Impact and Engagement Acceleration (RIEA) awards will support African academics and their Oxford collaborators to develop a strategic approach to public engagement with research and embed a culture that values and supports excellence in research engagement in their institutions.

### Building lasting networks Senior AfOx Visiting Fellows Programme

The Senior AfOx Visiting Fellows Programme will allow outstanding African researchers to undertake a Fellowship of up to a full academic year at the University of Oxford.

The Senior Fellowships will enable sustained engagement including during term time, allowing Fellows to share their expertise broadly across Oxford as well as build long-term institutional collaborations with Oxford.



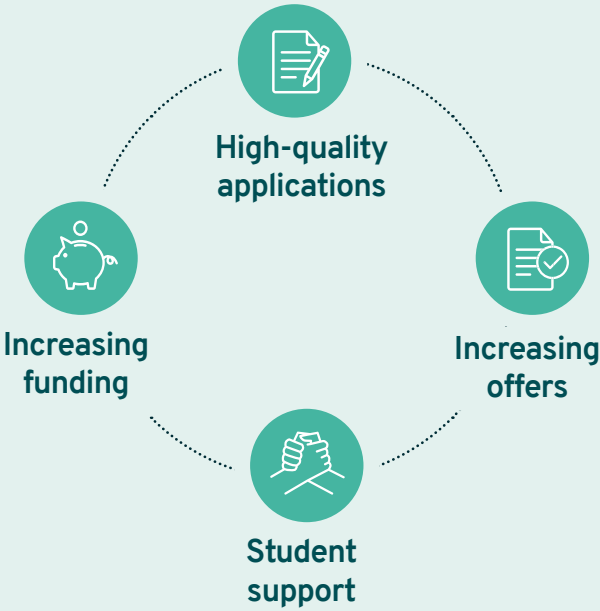
# Supporting world-class training for African graduates

**By 2050 the majority of the world's student age population will be in Africa. African graduates and researchers will play a key role in contributing to the future of not just the continent, but the world**

At AfOx, we have been working with departments, colleges and scholarship committees across the

University to maximise opportunities available to prospective African applicants and to support current African students at Oxford.

We are taking a multi-pronged approach aimed at increasing the numbers and quality of African applications, improving the uptake of offers by supporting scholarships access and providing on- course support to African graduates at Oxford.



## Attracting high quality applications from prospective students

### Virtual Open Day

Applying for an Oxford graduate degree can feel quite overwhelming. To help prospective applicants navigate the admissions process, we hosted a livestream Q&A session. Over 30,000 people tune into the AfOx Virtual Day annually. We received close to 150 questions from 30 African countries, which ranged from admissions criteria, the application process, scholarships, choosing a college and opportunities after graduation.

Colleagues from University of Oxford's graduate recruitment and scholarship teams as well as current students answered admissions related questions from prospective students. The livestream received positive feedback from potential applicants, and we will be hosting similar events for future admission cycles.



**"I understood how to write my personal statement after watching the AfOx Virtual Day, to make sure that it stands out. Since submitting my application, I have received a conditional offer at the University of Oxford and hope to join in the next academic year."**

MSc International Health & Tropical Medicine applicant from Nigeria



**"The Virtual Open Day was very pertinent. When I received the offer for a seat at the International Human Rights Law Programme, I knew that it was a promise for a life-long relationship."**

MSt International Human Rights & Law applicant from Ethiopia

### AfriSoc Mentoring Scheme

Every year the student-led University of Oxford's Africa Society, runs a Mentoring Programme for prospective African applicants applying to Oxford.

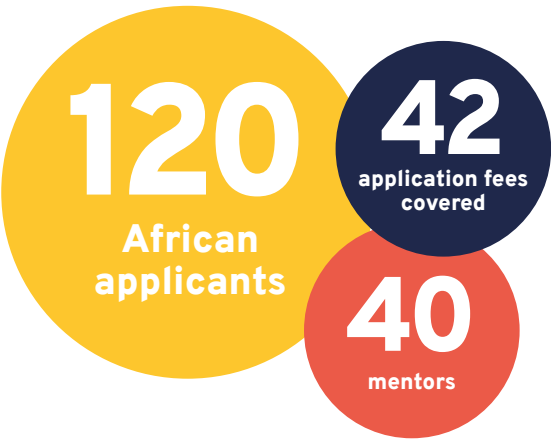
In the last academic year, 120 African applicants were mentored by 40 African graduates students currently studying at Oxford. The mentors lent their time and experience to help applicants with writing CV's and personal letters, managing referees and identifying suitable scholarships.

AfOx covers the application fees for prospective students applying for a graduate degree via the AfriSoc Mentoring Scheme. This year we covered the application fees for 42 applicants from 7 countries.



**"More than providing assistance on scholarships, this scheme helped me to know that I was not alone in what I was feeling, going through or in the questions that I had. It was so comforting to have someone to turn to and ask questions who had been in my shoes and had made it to the other side."**

Matipa Mukondiwa, MSc African Studies applicant from Zimbabwe



Graduate internships program

In partnership with the Nuffield Department of Medicine, AfOx supported 5 African graduate students from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda to undertake a two-month internship during the summer of 2019.



The internships were an opportunity for prospective DPhil applicants to experience the research environment in Oxford and build networks with potential academic supervisors. It also gave the academic supervisors a chance to assess the potential of future African graduate applicants.



**“The internship was equally beneficial for our research group and our intern, Jennifer. She’s made some breakthroughs in a piece of work that directly leads to data for a manuscript we are preparing.”**

**Wyatt Yue**, Group Head & Supervisor, Structural Genomics Consortium, NDM

The pilot was very successful; 3 out of 5 of the interns have applied for their DPhils at Oxford (awaiting funding decisions), one intern has received a PhD offer at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the fifth intern has secured an academic position in their home country. The academic hosts involved in the scheme also gave very positive feedback and are more open to hosting African students in the future.

Thriving at Oxford

Acknowledging the challenges encountered by international students in general and African students more specifically at Oxford, AfOx has developed a set of tailored support programs delivered in partnership with the Oxford University Africa Society (AfriSoc).

Academic Writing Workshop

Adjusting to a new academic environment and style of writing can be challenging. To support students to adjust to the Oxford style of writing, we facilitated a writing workshop to discuss essay formats, dissertation writing, references and how to synthesise information. Participants also had the opportunity to write mock essays and receive feedback from Oxford academics and senior graduate students.



**“I found it to be very helpful and well structured. I used to refer to it and other essay guidelines gathered from my course supervisors. I will highly recommend it to any student at Oxford University.”**

**Dr. Mary Ansong**, MSc Clinical Embryology from Ghana

African Graduate Social

At the beginning of Michaelmas term, we hosted a graduate social for African students in Oxford. Over 100 African students new to the University got a chance to interact with current students, alumni and staff in an informal environment. The aim of the reception was to help build a flourishing community, create networks and provide institutional support for African graduate students in Oxford.

Graduate Research and Innovation Forum

The Graduate Research and Innovation Forum (GRAIN) is a dedicated space for highlighting the academic contributions of Africans at Oxford. GRAIN is a unique platform for African graduate students and researchers to present their research, share ideas and find areas of synergy. It is also an opportunity for students to practise presenting their research to an interdisciplinary audience.



**“It has been an impactful and necessary space for students and academics from Africa and the Diaspora. I have been moved to see how much confidence, community and research for purpose has come from this effort led by AfOx and African students at the world’s number 1 University.”**

**Simphiwe Laura Stewart**, DPhil candidate in Geography, University of Oxford



Talks and speakers

Saving Ourselves – Medical Interventions from Africa to the World

- **Britt Hanson**, DPhil candidate, Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, Oxford
- **Atherton Mutombwera**, CEO, Hutano Diagnostics
- **Tinashe Chandaoka**, DPhil candidate, Department of Surgical Sciences, Oxford

GRAIN-lite: Africa and the humanitarian crises

- **Chuor Garang**, MSc Clinical Embryology, Oxford
- **Noon Altijani**, DPhil candidate, Department of Population Health, Oxford

Untangling the story lines – a reimagined Democratic Republic of Congo

- **Nicole Batumike**, MSc African Studies, Oxford
- **Johise Namwira**, MSc African Studies, Oxford
- **Vava Tampa**, Congolese Rights Activist, Founder of Save the Congo
- **Emile Luhahi Osumba**, Founder of Swiss Congo Chamber of Commerce
- **Noëlla Coursaris Musunka**, Model, Philanthropist, Founder of Malaika



# AfOX Events

## Discussions, debates and networking on all things Africa in Oxford

### Driving Africa's prosperity through sustainable and innovative practices: Guest lecture by Prof. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, Former President of Mauritius

In partnership with the African Studies Centre, we had the pleasure of hosting HE Prof. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the 6th President of Mauritius. Prof. Gurib-Fakim delivered a lecture on 'Driving Africa's prosperity through sustainable and innovative practices'. The talk was followed by a networking reception and dinner with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford and other staff and students. You can watch the guest lecture [here](https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/driving-africas-prosperity-through-sustainable-and-innovative-practices) (https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/driving-africas-prosperity-through-sustainable-and-innovative-practices)



“Hosting such an event is an indication and a reaffirmation that Africa’s prosperity matters and that we all share a common destiny, ideals and principles and we have a commonality of purpose.”

Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, 6th President of Mauritius



Meeting with Vice Chancellor Mamokgethi Phakeng, University of Cape Town, South Africa

### Support for early career researchers

AfOx was delighted to welcome Prof. Mamokgethi Phakeng and arrange a meeting with Oxford researchers collaborating with UCT on a range of research areas. The Vice Chancellor was updated on key projects between researchers based in South African Universities and Oxford. This was followed by an exchange of ideas on charting new ways of supporting early career researchers in both institutions.

### UK-Kenya Partnerships in Science, Research and Innovation

Following from long-standing relationships with Africa-based diplomats, AfOx was honoured to host Ms Susie Kitchens, the British Deputy High Commissioner to Kenya, for a high-level dialogue with researchers based at Oxford.

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss current partnerships in science and innovation between researchers based in the University of Oxford and institutions across Africa, and Kenya in particular, while also mapping out research priorities for the future.



Meeting with Susie Kitchens, Deputy High Commissioner and Permanent Representative to UNEP and UN Habitat, Kenya





**The Political Life of an Epidemic**  
Cholera, Crisis and Citizenship in Zimbabwe  
Simukai Chigudu



**Book launch: The political life of an epidemic**

Together with the Oxford Department of International Development, we co-hosted the launch of Dr. Simukai Chigudu's new book, [‘The political life of an epidemic: cholera, crises and citizenship in Zimbabwe’](#).

In the book, Simukai conveys the lived experience of disease, recognises both the impact and limits of humanitarian efforts, and presents a compelling account of state transformation and the struggle for substantive citizenship in Zimbabwe.

**AfOx Insakas**

Our insakas continue to convene researchers, students, alumni, the wider University community and guests from around the world to share ideas and knowledge about Africa-focused research

In the last year, we hosted 4 insakas and 8 speakers who presented on a diverse range of disciplines including international development, medicine, psychiatry, archaeology and law. Followed by a networking reception, AfOx insakas are a great

opportunity to meet people from diverse research backgrounds with an interest in Africa.

We are grateful to all our speakers for their stimulating presentations and to St. Cross College for hosting the insakas.

You can tune into our insakas from anywhere in the world at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/africa-oxford-initiative>

**Gbagba and Jaadehl as Anti-Corruption Revolutions from ‘Below’?**



Nov 19  
Robtel Pailey  
& Jacob McKnight



**Africa Works: Reflections on Failures and Successes in Healthcare Innovation**

**The future of UK-Africa Research Partnerships Development Research and beyond**



Dec 19  
Gill Wells  
& Alan Stein



**Communicating the Diagnosis of Life Threatening Conditions to Children**

**Why is contemporary Africa poor: insights from archaeology and deep history**



Feb 20  
Shadreck Chirikure & Kate O'Regan



**The role of South Africa's Constitutional Court in its new democratic order**

**Growing up with HIV infection in Africa**



Mar 20  
Sarah Rowland-Jones  
& Miles Tendi



**The responsibility of African intellectuals**



# Knowledge Exchange

Supporting the exchange of ideas, research evidence, skills and experience to a multidisciplinary audience

## Connecting Minds Africa 2019 Conference



The African Academy of Sciences hosted the first edition of Connecting Minds Africa (CoMA) in September 2019. AfOx worked with the AAS to organise the meeting and a number of AfOx Fellows attended. CoMA brought together young African scholars to share their research and connect with other scholars to build mutually supportive networks to drive the development of science, technology and innovation on the continent. The outcome of this conference will be to build a vibrant community of young scholars committed to brokering connections that enhance their career progression, while also accelerating their contribution to Africa’s strategy for research and development.

## Oxford Africa Conference 2019: Africa’s Relevance: Locally, Continentally and Globally

The Oxford Africa Conference, hosted by the Oxford University Africa Society is one of the largest student-led conferences in Europe. With support from AfOx, the Conference brings together heads of state, policymakers, business leaders, academics, activists and artists from across the world to create action plans for the future, debate key issues and build networks.

Over 40 speakers and 500 participants across Africa and the UK attended the Conference.

## Oxford University China Africa Network Conference: Opportunity and Risk in the Belt and Road Initiative

AfOx supported the Oxford University China Africa Network (OUCAN) to host their annual OUCAN Conference, themed ‘Opportunity and Risk in the Belt and Road Initiative’. Over 100 academics, practitioners and government officials across Africa, China and the UK explored China’s role on the African continent, reflecting on the current status and trajectory of the academic work on China-Africa relations.



## Facing the future workshop

The Oxford Human Rights Hub, in partnership with the World Health Organisation and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, is developing a documentary series titled ‘Shaping the Future’. The series looks at the role human rights law can play in addressing challenges relating to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, and ensuring progress towards the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. With support from AfOx, the Oxford Human Rights Hub interviewed leading scholars, activists, lawyers, doctors and policy makers working on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Nairobi.

## Conservation Optimism Summit

AfOx supported the convening of over 200 attendees and 60 speakers from 30 countries for the Conservation Optimism Summit in Oxford. In addition to plenaries,



workshops and creative sessions, the Summit also featured a film festival. 327 professional and amateur filmmakers submitted short films, which were showcased at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and made available [online](#).



## Deep Learning Indaba

For the 2nd year, AfOx was delighted to support the third Deep Learning Indaba in Kenyatta University, Nairobi, attended by over 500 participants from across the African continent. The goal of the Deep Learning Indaba is to strengthen the AI and machine learning community across the Africa. Participants shared their research across a wide set of topics, from using recurrent networks for crochet patterns, and predicting disease outcomes, to new algorithms for reinforcement learning, and questions on the ethical and governance aspects of AI.

Marcel Atemkeng from Rhodes University, South Africa won the Kambule Doctoral Award, sponsored by AfOx, for his thesis ‘Data Compression, Field of Interest Shaping and Fast Algorithms for Direction-dependent Deconvolution in Radio Interferometry’. AfOx looks forward to hosting Dr. Atemkeng at the University of Oxford to present his work in 2020.

## Global Surgery Course

The second Oxford Global Surgery Course took place in Oxford in September. 33 clinicians interested in improving surgical, anesthesia and obstetrics care globally attended the course taught by expert Oxford, UK and international faculty. AfOx supported 10 African participants, which enhanced the international knowledge exchange on global efforts to strengthen surgical systems.



# Communications

## Discussions, debates and the dissemination of ideas

### AfOx stories

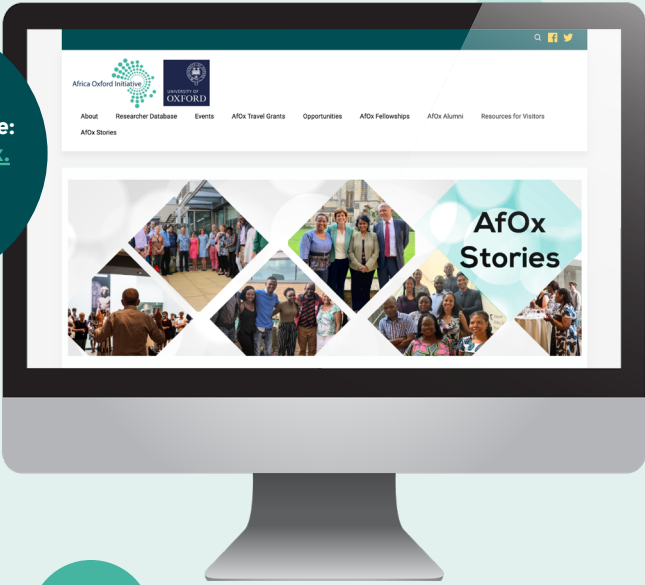
We regularly share the stories of African graduates, AfOx Fellows and Travel Grant recipients. Through these stories, we hope to highlight the journey and motivation of the incredible members of the AfOx community and encourage more colleagues to engage with us.

### AfOx website

We keep the AfOx community updated on news, events, stories, opportunities and other information about Africa related research and activities in Oxford via the AfOx website: <http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk/>



Visit AfOx Stories here: <http://www.afox.ox.ac.uk/afox-stories/>



### Podcasts

In 2019, we introduced the AfOx podcasts to ensure that our events and seminars reach a global audience. So far, we have published 18 podcasts include:

- [Decolonising African museums: the Africa perspective](#)
- [Medical advice and negotiations of medical authority in Nigerian HIV consultations](#)
- [A Forum for Reason: Reflections on the Role of South Africa's Constitutional Court](#)
- [Why is contemporary Africa poor: insights from archaeology and deep history](#)

### Social media highlights

We use our digital platforms to highlight the work of the AfOx community and share opportunities. Please do connect with us to like share and tweet!





# Looking to the future



Dr Mona Ibrahim,  
Research Officer, UKRI  
GCRF Accelerating  
Achievement for  
Africa's Adolescents Hub

“

“As students, we were taught the most idealised version of Medicine. We became very familiar with books that highlighted the latest evidence-based management guidelines. However, with little to no management skills at the hospital, the official international guidelines were nothing but a pretty poster on the wall.”

“

“As a doctor in that region, it was interesting to see how such a diverse set of people had binding commonalities. Every day at sunset, all the hospital staff from cleaners to financial managers would come together at the doctor’s office and have coffee and tea together. Those were my favourite moments. It felt like we were family”

This gap between the ideal and reality led Dr. Mona Ibrahim, a medical doctor from Sudan to study the MSc International Health and Tropical Medicine at Oxford.

Mona completed her medical degree from the University of Medical Sciences and Technology in Khartoum, after which she started working at the Um-Dawanban hospital in the outskirts of Khartoum. The Um-Dawanban hospital covers the town of Um-Dawanban along with four villages in the area, providing medical facilities for a population of 500,000 people. Communities with distinctive cultures, traditions and belief systems inhabit each village.



“

“The knowledge I’ve learnt was just one of many benefits I’ve gained from this course. My colleagues came from all around the world and from a range of career backgrounds. It was fascinating to hear their perspectives and see how they solves problems differently. This environment encouraged me to think at a larger scale instead of simply seeing a problem through my medical scope”

Since completing her degree, Mona has started working as a Research Officer for the UKRI GCRF Accelerating Achievement for Africa’s Adolescents (Accelerate) Hub embedded in the Department of Social Policy and Intervention at the University of Oxford. Supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund, the aim of the Adolescent’s Hub is to improve outcomes for 20 million adolescents in 34 countries across Africa. Mona is responsible for the Hub’s engagement with the United Nations Development Program to ensure that policy makers consider the evidence provided by the Hub.

“

“I believe in my country and in its potential. Through the next few years I aim to become qualified enough to work in health policy. I would like to promote the strategies encouraging universal health coverage and health-in-all policies. I know that Sudan will grow, prosper and become a great nation. I hope to be a part of that.”

As a doctor at the hospital, Mona witnessed health challenges faced in low resource settings, where very few patients reached the hospital. And due to limited capacity, most patients were sent back to the same environment that made them ill. She became very interested in understanding interdisciplinary perspectives such as the ethics, economical evaluations and social determinants of health.

Moving to Oxford was an adventure in itself for Mona. The student-led learning and emphasis on critical appraisals was quite different from her previous training, and the collegiate system was both novel and confusing. One of her toughest challenges was the need to match high expectations and ‘fit in’. However, Mona soon learned to embrace herself and keep pushing to become a better version of herself. She also learned to question contextual factors, people’s positions and her own inherent biases.



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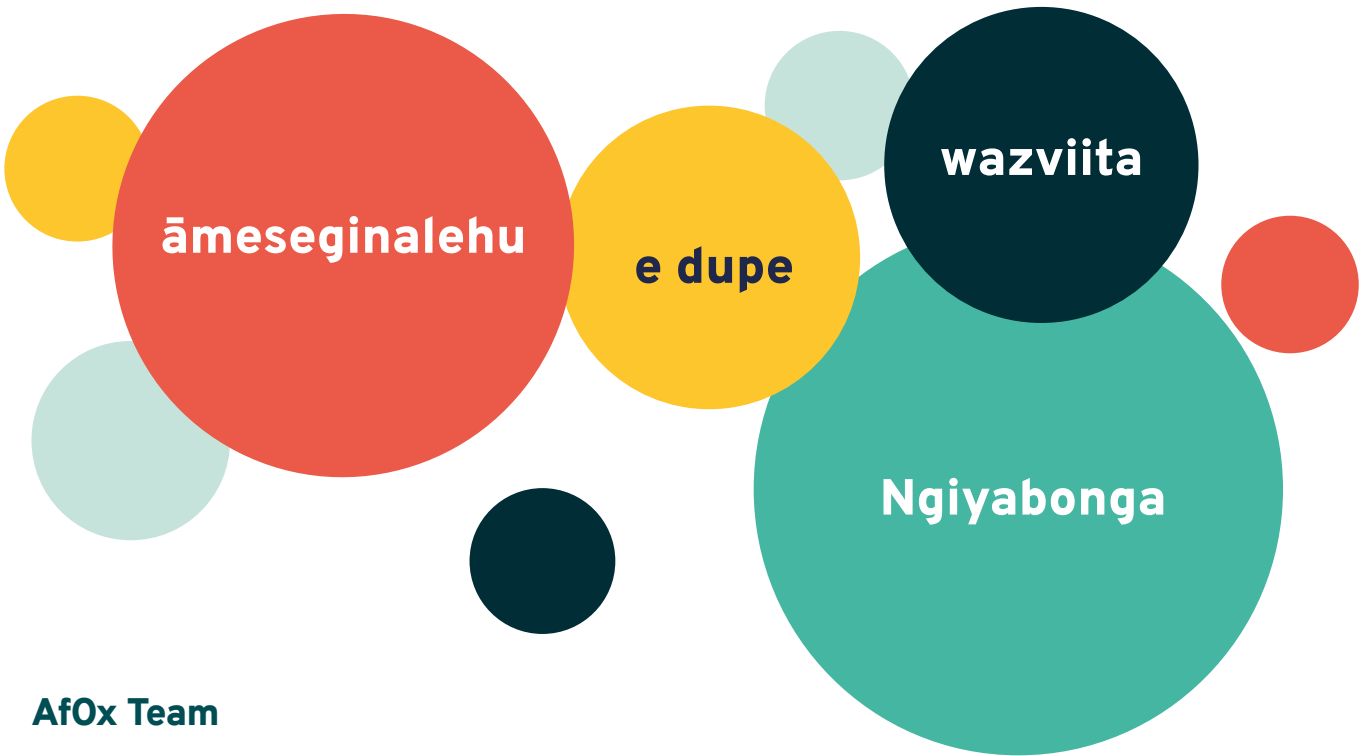
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- And many others, you know who you are!**



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