

# Western



# The Africa Institute

## Upcoming Events

### Africa-Western Collaboration Day

November 18th, 2020

This Africa-Western Collaboration Day we are doing things a little differently. This year we will be hosting a virtual conference for graduate students and young scholars, called Africa-Western Collaboration Day: Advancing Academic Diversity.

Our call for papers, open for submissions until Monday, October 5th at 11:59 PM EST, is looking for research from any discipline which advances knowledge that contributes to African societies, economies, sciences, culture, technology, languages, health and well-being, among many other topics. If you are interested in submitting, you can find the call for papers on our website.

We look forward to hosting and hearing about the great research being done!

## Greetings from the New Director, Dr. Saverio Stranges



*Dear colleagues and students:*

*Firstly, thank you all for your generous availability to be part of the Africa Institute.*

*I also would like to acknowledge my predecessor, Dr. **Nicole Haggerty**, for her leadership over the last 3 years, as well as the other two previous directors of the Institute, Dr. **Joanna Quinn** (founding director) and **Irena Creed**, who have left a strong legacy with their work and vision.*

*Likewise, I am grateful to both **Jim Weese** and **Britta Baron**, former and current Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (International) for their support and trust in my new leadership role.*

*It is a great privilege and responsibility for me to lead this Institute, which includes a large number of scholars, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers across a range of disciplines and faculties, with common passion and genuine interest in Africa.*

*Over the last month, with the help of **Aislinn Adams** and **Melanie Katsivo**, we have revamped the **advisory board** with the inclusion of over 40 members including junior and senior scholars as well as graduate students from different schools, reflecting the diverse, inclusive and interdisciplinary nature of the Institute. Additionally, we have over 30 members, who actively contribute to the Institute. Altogether, this clearly demonstrates the large critical mass of scholarly activities focusing on Africa at Western University. This is a great starting point for my mandate!*

*Another important evolution of the Institute is the linkage with the ongoing **anti-racism** initiative within our academic community. Thanks to the leadership of **Nicole Kaniki** and **Erica Lawson**, the Institute will soon produce a statement to convey our solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement and against anti-Black racial violence around the world. In addition, we hope to implement a series of realistic actions in the fight for social justice, both within and beyond our academic community. Anti-racism will be a central focus in our future vision and mission.*

*My appointment as the New Director, however, comes during a critical transition for the Institute, with uncertainty about its future and long-term financial sustainability. Also, the Institute will need to go through a renewal process. Hence, I am counting on your contribution, intellect and creativity to explore potential sources of revenue for the Institute, as well as to develop a new vision and mission, which will help enhance its impact and visibility locally, nationally and globally. In the next few months, we plan to organize a retreat to discuss the re-visioning of the Institute.*

*I am sincerely grateful to all of you for your support and contribution, and I am confident that with your help we can ensure a bright future for the Africa Institute.*

Sincerely,



Saverio Stranges, MD, PhD  
Director, Africa Institute  
Professor and Chair, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
Professor, Department of Family Medicine  
Vice-President Chronic Disease Section, European Public Health Association  
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry  
Western University

# Welcome to our new Advisory Board Members!

- ✦ Britta Baron, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (International), Western International
- ✦ Mel Katsivo, International Research Officer, Western International/Western Research/Schulich
- ✦ Laté Lawson-Hellu, Professor, Department of French Studies, Faculty of Arts & Humanities (Coordinator of GRELCEF)
- ✦ Girma Bitsuamlak, Associate Professor, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering (Associate Director WindEEE Research Institute; Canada Research Chair in Wind)
- ✦ Elysée Nouvet, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences
- ✦ Oana Branzei, Professor, Ivey Business School (Director, Sustainability Certificate Program; Donald F. Hunter Professor of International Business)
- ✦ Nicole Kaniki, Special Advisor to the President (Anti-Racism), EDI Specialist
- ✦ Lorraine Davies, Associate Vice-Provost (Graduate & Post-Doctoral Studies), School of Graduate & Post-Doctoral Studies (Associate Professor, Sociology)
- ✦ Shehzad Ali, Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Canada Research Chair in Public Health Economics)
- ✦ Ava John-Baptiste, Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Cross-Appointed to Anaesthesia & Perioperative Medicine; Public Health)
- ✦ Michael Silverman, Chair, Department of Infectious Disease, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Associate Scientist, Lawson Health Research Institute)
- ✦ Udunna Anazodo, Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Biophysics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Scientist, Lawson Health Research Institute)
- ✦ Mamadou Diop, Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Biophysics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Scientist, Lawson Health Research Institute)

- ✦ Narinder Paul, Chair, Department of Medical Imaging, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- ✦ Jessica Prodger, Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology & Immunology, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- ✦ Samuel Asfaha, Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Clinician-scientist, Lawson Health Research Institute)
- ✦ Francisco Olea-Popelka, Associate Professor, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Beryl Ivey Endowed Chair in One Health)
- ✦ Arlene MacDougall, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Director of Research and Innovation, St. Joseph's Health Care & Director of Global MINDS)
- ✦ Michael Clarke, Adjunct Professor, Public Health, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- ✦ Cynthia Kenyon, Professor Emeritus, Department of Neonatal Paediatrics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- ✦ Bryan Neff, Professor, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science (Associate Dean, Research)
- ✦ Godwin Arku, Associate Professor, Department of Geography & the Environment, Faculty of Social Science (Western Faculty Scholar)
- ✦ Erica Lawson, Associate Professor, Department of Women's Studies & Feminist Research, Faculty of Arts & Humanities (Undergraduate Chair)
- ✦ Joanna Quinn, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science (Cross-Appointed to Law; Affiliate-Appointed to Women's Studies)
- ✦ Lindsay Scorgie-Porter, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Huron
- ✦ Marlene Janzen Le Ber, Associate Professor & Chair, Department of Leadership Studies, Brescia
- ✦ Chinelo Ezenwa, PhD Candidate, Department of English Studies, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
- ✦ Aimée Josephine Utuza, PhD Candidate, Department of Health Promotion, Faculty of Health Sciences

- ✦ Adaku Ohuruogu, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Information and Media Studies
- ✦ Jason Were, PhD Candidate, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- ✦ Carelle Mang-Benza, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography & the Environment, Faculty of Social Science
- ✦ Florence Anfaara, PhD Candidate, Department of Women's Studies & Feminist Studies, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
- ✦ Karolina Werner, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Faculty of Social Science
- ✦ Janet Martin, Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Cross-Appointed to Anesthesia & Perioperative Medicine, Program Director of EPiCOR and MEDICI Programs)

*As well as our returning Advisory Board Members*

- ✦ Saverio Stranges, Director, Chair & Professor, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry
- ✦ Nicole Haggerty, Past Director, Associate Professor, Ivey Business School (Director, Ubuntu Management Education Initiative)
- ✦ Bob Gough, Director of International Internships & Development, Western International
- ✦ Henri Boyi, Professor, Department of French Studies, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
- ✦ Isola Ajiferuke, Associate Professor, Faculty of Information & Media Studies
- ✦ Uche Ikenyei, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Information & Media Studies
- ✦ Eric Arts, Professor, Department of Microbiology & Immunology, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Canada Research Chair in HIV Pathogenesis and Viral Control)
- ✦ Isaac Luginaah, Professor, Department of Geography & the Environment, Faculty of Social Science
- ✦ Katherine McKenna, Associate Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Social Science (Cross-Appointed to Women's Studies)
- ✦ Thomas Tiekou, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, King's
- ✦ Lameck Osinde, Project Management Instructor @ Western Continuing Studies

♦ Akbar Saeed, Professor @ Laurier University, Past Director of Tcshepo Institute

## An Interview with Western Alumni, Andrew Nevin

*This month we are featuring an interview with Andrew Nevin, Western alumni (BSc'80 & MA'81), who has been working in Lagos, Nigeria for the past 12 years. He recently reached out to the Africa Institute to explore how the Africa Institute, and more broadly, Canada, can strengthen relations with Nigeria, which experts expect to become the second most populous country in the world by the end of the century. Read below to discover how Canadian-Nigerian relations sit currently, barriers to their relationship, and potential avenues for future strengthening of ties between the two countries.*

*To give a brief overview of what Andrew has been up to since completing his education, it has involved a lot of international work outside of his home of Canada. He learned from his time working in China and Hong Kong that he enjoyed working with developing markets. In 2008, he was wrapping up a decade in China and returning to the UK, where he had completed his doctorate. Ready to start something new, he joined PricewaterhouseCoopers, or PwC, on December 15, 2008, or the day that the Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. PwC wanted him to explore megatrends amidst the 2008 financial crisis, something that was understudied at that time. As stated by Andrew, "I was given the choice to work in the Middle East or in Nigeria. I had stronger support for Nigeria, which has now been my home for the past 12 years".*

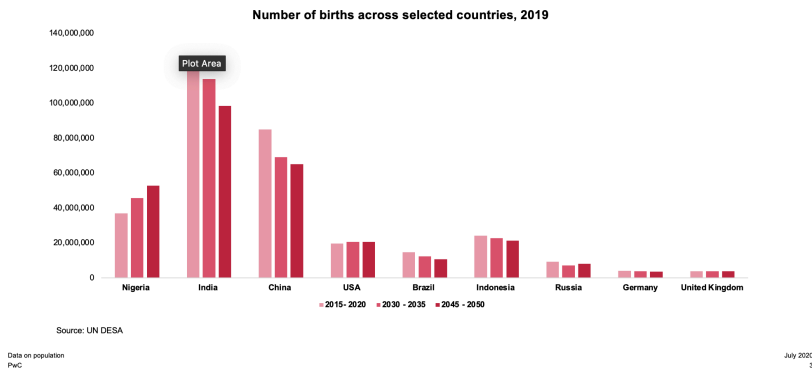
*When asked to reflect upon Canadian-Nigerian relations, Andrew has cautious optimism. There are some aspects that have been well developed but he believes Canada "has been punching far below its weight". The areas of strength between Canada and Nigeria are immigration and security cooperation. "If you look at the flow of students and immigrants into Canada, you can see the connection. We have roughly 13 500 students here in Canada from Nigeria, and many of them bring a much more positive story of Nigeria than we Canadians are used to". Andrew points to the fact that Nigeria can view this migration as "brain drain", a term that is used to describe how many Nigerian's will travel abroad to become highly educated, and then never return home to bring that education back. However, Andrew counters this with the fact that at least these highly educated Nigerians help to bring a much more positive perspective of Nigerians to Canadians. In Canada, we have been especially benefitting from what is called the "Trump effect" – many international students are now turning to Canada as an alternative to the States. The flow of immigration almost always brings two countries ties closer together – Andrew points out Lebanon, India, and China as other countries Canada has close ties to which stem out of immigration.*

*Security cooperation has also been a strong suit for Canada and Nigeria. But Nigeria has an ever growing population – it is currently the largest in Africa, and likely soon to*

*become the second largest population in the world. The demographic realities are that the Nigerian population has not yet peaked, and there will be an exponential amount of growth before we see that population peak. There is also the security issue of the West African region which plays a large role. West Africa is home to roughly 800 million people, and is constantly facing security challenges, leaving it highly unstable. There is a refugee crisis and there are serious ramifications. “Think of Syria and its ramifications on the global stage – and now think of West Africa, facing those same ramifications, but on a much larger scale”.*

#### Country by country comparison of births in selected countries...

Population of births in Nigeria were estimated to account for almost 40% of total births in West and Central Africa, and more than 23% of births in SSA in 2019...Globally, over half of the world's births are estimated to take place in just eight countries, including Nigeria (UNICEF)...



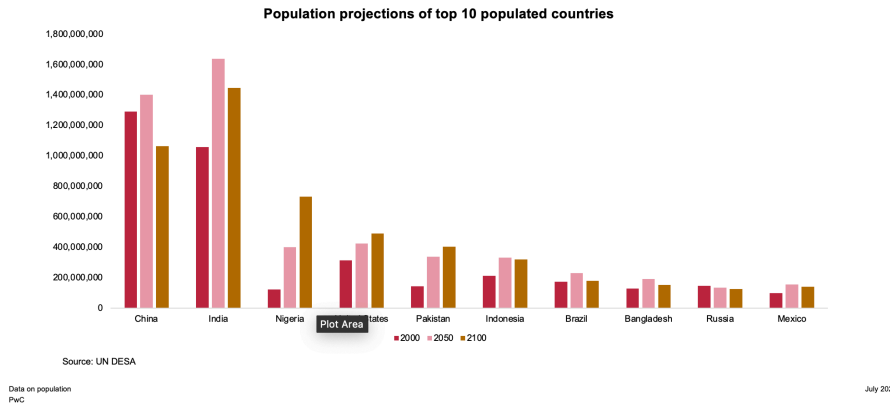
*He further points to our unique English/French bilingualism, which has a natural affinity to commonly bilingual West Africa. Many West African countries are bilingual in English and French due to their colonized history, many by either France or the UK. Furthermore, Quebec, he points out, has been increasingly active in West Africa, which has seen great success.*

*With that being said, Andrew recognizes a few barriers to the Canadian-Nigerian relationship. The first barrier he recognizes is “There is a lot going on in the world, and it’s understandable that Canada isn’t able to be everywhere all the time.” Now add COVID to the mix, and grabbing international business opportunities seems to be on the back burner amidst a global pandemic. Furthermore, international affairs have made a huge pivot towards Asia, leaving Africa behind. The second barrier is a knowledge gap between the two countries. In Canada there are still negative views when it comes to Sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria, such as economic crises, corruption, and cybercrime. There are positives that come out of Nigeria, such as the growing music industry and film industry, known as “Nollywood” but these positives are overshadowed by Nigeria’s economic problems. The third barrier is their reputation, which largely stems from the knowledge gap. Although it is true that Nigeria does face certain difficulties, Andrew states it is also time for Nigerian government to really focus on projecting the positive work and stories happening in Nigeria out to the world.*

*Furthermore, there is a lack of a strong diplomatic mission presence in Nigeria. “In comparison to other embassies I work with here in Nigeria, a strong Canadian presence is noticeably lacking due to high turnover within the diplomatic mission”. In terms of the potential of Nigeria as a growing economy, there are huge opportunities that Canada is missing out on. “As of now, there is no major Canadian business in Nigeria”.*

**Projection for country ranking by population (top 10 countries)...**

Nigeria's population is projected to more than double in size from 2000 to 2050...The Country is also expected to surpass the United States to become the third most populous country in the world with population of 732.9 million by 2100...



*When asked how Andrew has found the relationship between Nigeria and Canada to change over his 12 years in Lagos, there has yet to be much to report. “Sadly, there has not been significant change. The same recurring issues have yet*

*to see any major solutions over the past decade”. A positive he shares is that civil societies, NGO’s, and the private sector over the past decade have become more transparent and open – something the government has not yet necessarily achieved. However, he says that change has been positive, and slowly but surely, we are seeing more accountability.*

*The conversation ended with what was so unique about Nigeria that Andrew had ended up settling for arguably one of the longest periods of his life in Lagos. He stated quite simply “There is no place that has the energy of Nigeria – and I have lived in Paris, London, China, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Toronto”. He believes the unique energy once harnessed in the right positive ways will unlock the potential of the country. For example, imagine if the ingenuity of the cybercriminals were overcome and Nigeria replaced that criminality with innovation for technology. Not to mention the students coming out of Nigeria have been excelling in science and engineering, and demonstrating an extremely bright, and extremely large, potential future generation of innovators. He concludes with one simple statement that says it all: “It’s time for Canada to step up and seize the opportunities that Nigeria has to offer”.*

**The Africa Institute Graduate Student Committee**

**Welcome back graduate students!**

The AIGSC will be having a virtual Meet & Greet on Friday, October 2nd from 5 to 6 pm EST. Please join us to hear more about the Africa Institute Graduate Student Committee, the Africa Institute, and the opportunities and events that being a part of the committee can provide you with.

If you would like further information on the Africa Institute Graduate Student Committee, please reach out to Uche Ikenyei, at [uikenyei@uwo.ca](mailto:uikenyei@uwo.ca).