

# Western



# The Africa Institute

## Upcoming Events

### African Conversations Series

Thursday, March 18 2021

1:30 to 2:30 pm

#### Zoom

More information can be found on the next page of the newsletter.

### Canadian Association of African Studies Annual Conference

Hosted by the Africa Institute at  
Western University

Monday June 7th to Thursday  
June 10th 2021

Zoom, with possibility for those  
in SW Ontario to gather

You can check out and read  
further about the conference  
on the [CAAS website](#), but stay  
tuned as we begin to share  
details of the exciting program!

## Greetings from the Africa Institute!

Dear colleagues,

We would like to provide a brief synopsis of the milestones and achievements of the Africa Institute over the last few months.

First of all, last month we received notification of the **successful funded application for the Queen Elizabeth 11 Advanced Scholars West Africa program**, led by Dr. Isaac Luginaah, Professor of Health Geography and member of the Africa Institute. This project will focus on Climate Change, Food Security and Health in West Africa, and includes a number of scholars of the Africa Institute across different disciplines and faculties. The funding will support the exchange of 11 Western scholars and 11 scholars from partners in Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Senegal and Nigeria.

We have recently finalized a **new strategic and action plans** for the Africa Institute, following our strategic retreat on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, which was conducted to ensure a re-focused vision, mission, and sustainable plan for the Africa Institute's future, at Western University. This document that provides a strategic direction for the Institute, is the outcome of a thorough and inclusive process, reflecting the contributions of several scholars and students. Details of the strategic and action plans will be soon posted on our website.

*Continued on the next page...*

Under the leadership and vision of Dr. Melanie Katsivo, Associate Director for Programs and Partnerships of the Africa Institute, we have undertaken a number of new initiatives, such as the launch of the **African Conversations Series**, which will run monthly, with the first session taking place on Thursday, March 18th from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. The calendar of speakers will be posted on our website.

Furthermore, we have recently launched the Canada-wide **Canada-Africa Young Scholars Coalition (CAYSC)** whose membership will include undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral Fellows and other trainees of African heritage or identity from across Canada, as well as allies. The Coalition will conduct 3 projects: 1. Student Mental Health 2. CAYSC Forum that will host events and 3. Development of a Canada-wide Alumni Network. The Young Scholars will be mentored by the Africa Institute Faculty and Staff. A CAYSC page has been set up on our website.

Thanks again for your great contributions, wishing you a healthy and productive end of academic year!

Melanie Katsivo and Saverio Stranges

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## Successful Queen Elizabeth Scholarships Advanced Scholars West Africa Program

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A new team of young researchers from Western University and West Africa will soon be looking at ways to improve social development in struggling West African countries by addressing climate issues, thanks to a grant program focused on building research capacity and collaborations around the globe.

The project, spearheaded by The Africa Institute at Western, is funded through a \$300,000 award from the [Queen Elizabeth Scholarships Advanced Scholars West Africa program](#) and will be used to train early-career researchers to better understand how to address climate change and nurture sustainable livelihoods in five West African countries.

The funding will support the exchange of 11 Western scholars and 11 scholars from partners in Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Senegal and Nigeria. Together, they will focus on issues of climate change and sustainable livelihoods to improve social development in selected areas of those countries — including better health, gender equity, empowerment of disadvantaged groups, good governance of land resources, and enhanced knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices.

*You can read the full story [here](#), and check out the graphic on the previous page to see some of the researchers involved in this project.*

## **Canada-Africa Young Scholars Coalition**

**The Africa Institute has launched the *Canada-Africa Young Scholars Coalition (CAYSC)* whose membership will include undergraduate students, graduate students, Postdoctoral Fellows, and other trainees of African heritage or identity from across Canada, as well as allies.**

Undergraduate students, Graduate students, Postdoctoral fellows and Trainees are invited to become members of the CAYSC.

This coalition will foster and promote collaborative, interdisciplinary scholarly approaches, as well as nurture mentorship and academic support for young African and Africanist scholars. The Africa Institute Faculty and Staff will support and work with this Young Scholars Coalition on an ongoing basis. By becoming a member of CAYSC, you will:

1. Partake in events, including networking opportunities
2. Become a part of a wide community of scholars in various disciplines and career stages, from across Canada and Africa
3. Receive information for research funding, workshops, and other relevant capacity building opportunities
4. Help to build the first Canadian coalition of young Africanist scholars.

The *Canada-Africa Young Scholars Coalition* has volunteer and work study positions for three exciting projects: 1. The Bell 5G Project in Student Mental Health; 2. The CASYC Forum; and 3. the Canada-Africa Alumni Network. You can learn more about these exciting positions [here](#).

*If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please send an email to [africain@uwo.ca](mailto:africain@uwo.ca)*

## African Conversations Series

We are super excited to announce the launch of the Africa Institute monthly talk series, titled “African Conversations”. The series will feature both internal and external presenters, and create a forum for regular discussions on current and trending African topics and research. The series will run monthly, with the first one taking place on Thursday, March 18th from 1:30 to 2:30 pm.

The African Conversations will be open to many different formats, and invites creative proposals from potential presenters, from students and faculty as well as our broader Africa Institute community.

On March 18 we are pleased to have three graduate students presenting on their respective research. You can access the Zoom link on our website [here](#).



### **Ebenezer Martin-Yeboah**

*“Young men and sexual health literacy: A social network analysis”*

PhD Candidate in Health Information Sciences

Winner of “Overall Best Presentation” at our 2020 Africa Western Collaborations Day



### **Florence Wullo Anfaara**

*“The Internal Logics of Gender Equality in Liberia: The case of women in Peace Huts”*

PhD Candidate in Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies



### **Jason Were**

*“The Double Burden of Malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa”*

PhD Candidate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics

*Stay tuned for future speakers!*

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## Building the Future of Interdisciplinary Research: The Western One Health Network

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Africa Institute member, Francisco Olea-Popelka, Beryl Ivey Endowed Chair in One Health, is featured in our newsletter to talk about his initiative, the **Western One Health Network**. Congratulations on your success Francisco!

**Brief description:** To tackle complex societal, cultural, economic, and health challenges affecting humans, animals, and the environment, the goal of this 1-year project is to create the “Western One Health Network” (WOHN), a physical and virtual hub that will facilitate the implementation of interdisciplinary (ID) research across Western University (UWO). The WOHN additionally will facilitate integration of UWO researchers with stakeholders in industry, government and non-governmental institutions, media, and the public, locally, nationally, and globally. Starting with a diverse founding cohort and strong commitment from 25 researchers from 11 departments in 4 different faculties contributing to ID research, we will establish the WOHN’s strategic objectives, core foundational documents (e.g., guiding principles, mission, vision, terms of reference), establish the management and organizational structure, and begin collecting the resources for creating and officially launching the WOHN. These activities will lay the foundation towards accomplishing our long-term goal of creating a Western One Health Institute in the future.

**Funding:** \$25,000 for stream 1 of the Interdisciplinary Development Initiatives at Western University.

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## Advisory Board Updates

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We are pleased to announce the Africa Institute Strategic Plan and Action Plan that our Advisory Board has been hard at work crafting since our Strategic Retreat in December 2020. Having finalized our plan, you can now access the full plan and action plan [here](#).

We are also excited to share that we have already made moves on certain action items, including: launch of the monthly African Conversations Series, a grant application to e-Campus Ontario to develop a virtual certificate program in African studies; launch of the Canada-Africa Young Scholars Coalition, whose activities will include a young scholars forum, a student mental health project and the development of the Canada-Africa Alumni Network; ongoing strategic partner development; website updates to keep information current and relevant; dissemination of funding and other opportunities; and research and grants development. We will also share our Strategic Plan and Action Plan with the Western Strategic Planning team, to ensure that our vision is included in the broader campus vision moving forward.

*A huge thank you to all those who have helped shape our Strategic Plan and Action Plan, and we look forward to the important work ahead as we forge towards achieving the goals outlined in the Action Plan.*

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*FRIENDLY REMINDER*

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*We would love to hear success stories from all of you to share with the community! If you have a recent publication, recent successful grant application, new project, an exciting event you would like to share, a student who is graduating, to anything else in between, please feel free to let us know at [africain@uwo.ca](mailto:africain@uwo.ca) and we will include it in our regular updates to the community!*

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