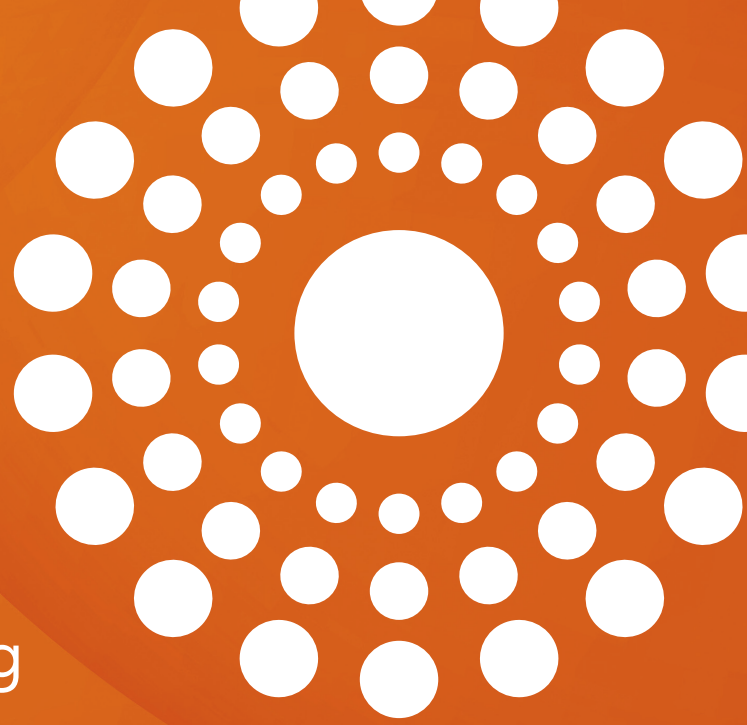


Carnegie African  
Diaspora Fellowship  
Program Alumni Convening

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# A Vision for the Future

Summarized Report

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**OCTOBER 7–8, 2021**

Marriott Marquis  
901 Massachusetts Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20021



# Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program

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# About the Convening

The Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP)—funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York and administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE)—connects the African academic diaspora in the U.S. and Canada with higher education institutions in Africa. CADFP Fellows spend time at host institutions in Africa, where they engage in a range of educational activities in their field of specialization, including curriculum co-development/revision, collaborative research, and training/mentoring of graduate students and early-career faculty. Since its launch in 2013, CADFP has awarded more than 500 fellowships at 168 universities across nine African countries. These fellowships have helped in not only achieving specific academic outcomes stipulated in the grant applications, but also enhancing capacities of host institutions and collaborating faculty as well as forming lasting partnerships and networks.

The 2021 CADFP Alumni Convening is organized to offer a space for reflecting on some of these experiences, drawing transferable lessons, and charting possible future pathways for diaspora engagement in African higher education.



SINCE 2013, CADFP  
HAS AWARDED  
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The convening brought together over 60 fellowship alumni with the specific objectives of:



**Sharing** practices, learnings, challenges and opportunities related to engagement with higher education institutions on the continent.



**Identifying** policy priorities and recommendations to inform existing policy frameworks in African higher education.



**Advancing** collaborative projects to expand academic communities across Africa.



**Exploring** the role of the diaspora in resource mobilization for African higher education.



**Generating** new knowledge about diaspora linkages through a publication of convening proceedings.

# Structure of the Convening

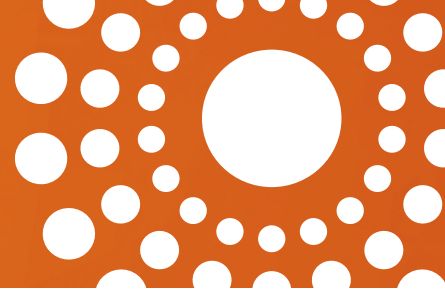
Composed of plenary sessions and parallel breakouts, the day-and-a-half convening was structured to have three major components.

- Introductory Sessions**
- Welcome messages and opening remarks
  - The Multiplier Effect—a video presentation
  - Introduction of participants
  - Keynote address

- Parallel Sessions**
- Paper presentations grouped into five thematic areas
- Building and enhancing research, teaching, and service capacity of host universities: What works?
  - Mentorship: The next generation of faculty, researchers, and scientists
  - Mutually beneficial collaboration
  - Online education, virtual collaboration, and mitigating the digital divide
  - Policy implications for higher education in Africa: Models for engaging the academic diaspora

- Reflections and Discussions**
- Reflections on day one
  - Future of higher education in Africa
  - The future of diaspora engagement programs

Although events were scheduled slightly differently (), the subsequent sections of this report will be structured following the above categorization of events based on their similarity and convergence of purpose.



# INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS



**D**ay one started with a welcome message by the event coordinator on behalf of the steering committee. The goal and agenda of the convening were introduced and opening remarks were delivered. Afterward, participants took a round introducing themselves with their names, their institutions, where and when they did their fellowship, and the biggest accomplishment related to their fellowship project.

A video presentation called *The Multiplier Effect* was also shown. The video featured members of the alumni steering committee discussing their fellowship experiences and the multiplying effect of their work under the fellowship. The multiplier effect conceives the notion that the work of a Fellow is likely to have a multidimensional ripple effect that extends beyond the stated objectives of the fellowship. This may include one or more of the following: having a lasting impact on programs or academic practices, building capacity at the departmental or institutional level, forging long-term collaboration with faculty, catalyzing institutional partnerships, reaching broader communities beyond the bounds of the university, and having a positive impact on development or renovation of national policies.

***The multiplier effect conceives the notion that the work of a Fellow is likely to have a multidimensional ripple effect that extends beyond the stated objectives of the fellowship.***

## Opening Remarks: Claudia Frittelli, Carnegie Corporation

Ms. Claudia Frittelli, Program Officer for Higher Education and Research in Africa at Carnegie Corporation of New York, started her remarks by welcoming participants and extending a congratulatory message to the organizing committee. She explained that the committee worked hard and persisted, despite the event being postponed twice due to the pandemic, because it was important to have the convening in person since that is what alumni networking is about.

Ms. Frittelli noted that the convening was taking place in a time of three key transitions. The first is the transition from in-person to virtual to hybrid models. This has been happening in the past year and half, and people were trying to navigate what this means for our work, classes, and so on. She remarked that it is important to think of this in the context of the linkages CADFP Fellows and

alumni have developed with institutions in Africa and encouraged participants to reflect on: what has changed, what we have learned, and what innovations have emerged?

Another transition is that, sadly, Carnegie lost its president, Dr. Vartan Gregorian, in April 2021. The foundation is currently in search for a new leader. This prompts thought about the kind of message that will be delivered to the new leadership regarding the foundation's support for higher education in Africa, including the diaspora fellowship. Does it make sense to continue the current support? What justifies the current approach? Are there any areas that might need reconsideration in the future? Ms. Frittelli stressed her expectation that the convening would inform these discussions.

The third transition concerns CADFP itself. Dr. Paul Zeleza, who has served as the chair of the CADFP Advisory Council since 2013, has recently decided to step away from his role as the vice chancellor of United States International University-Africa, CADFP's key partner in Africa. As it is always important for the program to have an African partner institution, discussions have been taking place with the program steering committee and other stakeholders, which finally led to Association of African Universities (AAU) as a partner going forward. Many of the steering committee members will stay on, and so it is not really a change in the structure of the program. AAU is a pan-African organization with an extensive reach across the continent and a good working relationship with many governments. Hopefully, this new partnership will create opportunities, including better engagement with governments and more countries participating in the program. Ms. Frittelli expressed her hope that the convening would also raise some ideas that will inform this transition.

She also took the moment to introduce the *African Academic Diaspora Toolkit: Preparation for university diaspora academics and hosts*, a document that came out following the policy consultation forum held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2019, through a grant to Carleton University and in partnership with the African Union. One of the workshops in the forum raised issues of intercultural relations as major success factors in the engagement of diaspora academics in Africa. The toolkit draws on those consultations and data collected from reports by Fellows to provide a reference source for both host institutions and new Fellows who are about to embark on a fellowship. It helps them navigate through the different challenges Diaspora and Host Fellows might expect in their engagement, and tools they can deploy to address these challenges. Ms. Frittelli encouraged participants of the convening to take a look at the toolkit, which was distributed at the convening, and offer any feedback they might have: If another edition is to be done in a few years, what should that look like?

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## Opening Remarks: Allan Goodman, Institute of International Education

Mr. Goodman, Chief Executive Officer of IIE, reiterated the importance of the meeting, not only for the symbolic value of marking the return of in-person gatherings (the convening was the first in-person gathering for many people since the pandemic), but also for its value in creating the opportunity for IIE and Carnegie to listen to the reflections of the CADFP alumni and to learn about their experiences and their thoughts about how to improve the program. He stressed the importance of diaspora communities, which, he noted, are very important to Carnegie Corporation, as the late president Dr. Vartan Gregorian himself was a diaspora scholar.

Dr. Goodman discussed the 102-year-long relationship between Carnegie Corporation and IIE, and how Carnegie Corporation is an important partner to IIE's work. He acknowledged Carnegie's commitment to support the academic diaspora fellowship program, and more broadly higher education in Africa. Under Dr. Gregorian's

leadership, Carnegie Corporation invested \$134.4 million in strengthening higher education and research capacity in African countries. In IIE's work with diaspora communities, Africa is leading the way, as it should be, in the engagement of its academic diaspora. Following CADFP's model, IIE has developed two other diaspora engagement initiatives: the Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program (GDFF) funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), and the Research Expertise in the Academic Diaspora (READ) Program funded by the Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF).

He also paid tribute to the late Dr. Gregorian, whose legacies—professionally and personally—hold a great place in the heart of IIE and Dr. Goodman himself. He then invited the participants to join him in observing a moment of silence in honor of Dr. Gregorian. Finally, he recognized the work of the alumni steering committee and different departments of IIE in organizing the convening and welcomed everyone to the event.

## Keynote address: H.E. Ambassador Hilda Suka-Mafudze, African Union Permanent Representative to the U.S.

In her remarks delivered through her representative, Ms. Seraphine Manirambona, the ambassador started by thanking the organizers for the invitation and congratulating Carnegie Corporation, IIE, and other stakeholders for the successful journey CADFP has had since its inception. She reminded the audience about the mandate of the African Union Mission to the U.S., which is aligned in spirit with CADFP and the very convening she was addressing. The Mission's mandate is to develop, maintain, and consolidate constructive and productive institutional relationships among the African Union and the government of the United States, Africans in the diaspora, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the U.S. private sector and civil society.

Given the increasing flow of people across international boundaries, African countries—as is typical of the developing world generally—tend to lose a greater percentage of highly skilled migrants as professionals emigrate to upgrade their skills in knowledge and technology hubs in the developed world, leaving acute gaps in the local economy, particularly in the skills and investment sectors. The unprecedented size of the diaspora, combined with a greater frequency in transnational movements, means that the diaspora has to be recognized, solicited, and cultivated as a true development partner.

The ambassador underscored that for Africa the choice is clear. The continent “simply can no longer afford to forfeit the vast talent and treasure of its global diaspora if it is to take the necessary next steps in its developmental evolution.” Therefore, African countries need to identify and establish mechanisms that can transform migration from a problem into an opportunity. She stressed that CADFP constitutes one of these mechanisms and urged the participants to keep pushing with the good work, noting that diaspora academics have the tools and intellectual resources to uplift Africa.

Speaking about the U.S.-AU higher education relations, the ambassador outlined a current initiative by the U.S. State Department called the University Partnerships

Initiative, whose purpose is strengthening existing relations and developing new collaborations between U.S. and African universities. This includes such areas of focus as promoting faculty and student exchanges, facilitating joint research, building administrative capacity, and creating public-private partnerships.

Within the broad umbrella of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 (CESA 16-25), she noted the AU's interest to work with all concerned parties, and she suggested that Carnegie Corporation and other U.S. partners may explore the following areas as potential foci of collaboration:

- a. Faculty training in STEM education, particularly in mechanical engineering and computer science
- b. Telemedicine
- c. Capacity building
- d. Strengthening of health systems
- e. Promotion of entrepreneurship among youth
- f. E-learning
- g. Community development projects to break the cycle of poverty and improve lives and livelihoods in food security, potable water security, sustainable agriculture, and improved economic opportunity
- h. Collaborative research; knowledge-sharing on administrative practices; and fostering university-based entrepreneurship programs
- i. Extension of the existing programs to neighboring countries so that this program can contribute to Africa's integration, in building the Africa we want

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, she identified the more immediate needs as related to digital connectivity, online platforms, teachers as facilitators, safety in schools, and skills-focused learning. The ambassador concluded by thanking all and wishing everyone a successful convening.

# PARALLEL SESSIONS

## THEMATIC PAPER PRESENTATIONS



The parallel sessions included the presentation of more than 50 papers and subsequent discussions on each. Grouped into five thematic areas, the papers presented different cases from the experiences of the CADFP Fellows with reflections and lessons learned for similar engagements and the overall betterment of higher education in Africa. Despite being classified into the five thematic areas for the purpose of management, there was a great deal of similarity and interdependence in the main aspects of experiences discussed under the different themes.

### Theme 1

Building and enhancing research, teaching, and service capacity of host universities: What works?

### Theme 2

Mentorship: The next generation of faculty, researchers, and scientists

### Theme 3

Mutually beneficial collaboration

### Theme 4

Online education, virtual collaboration, and mitigating the digital divide

### Theme 5

Policy implications for higher education in Africa: Models for engaging the academic diaspora

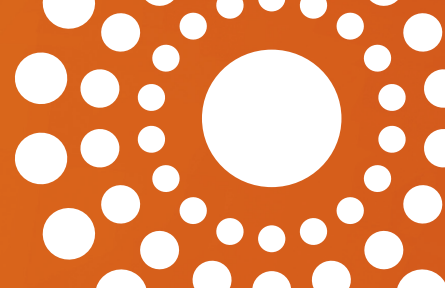
The sessions displayed the wide disciplinary diversity of CADFP Fellows' engagement, including those going beyond the traditional disciplinary boundaries: ethno-mathematics, machine learning, consensus management, digital reference skills (using analytics to make better decisions), mental health and well-being, etc. Cases were also discussed demonstrating the innovative and impactful approaches in CADFP-mediated engagements.

For instance, a unique case of introducing mental health and well-being in a military institution by focusing on training of trainers was discussed. The fact that the importance of mental health and well-being, a subject often an area of social stigma, was recognized and addressed in such a context is a huge testament to how far CADFP has made impact. Further, advances on ethno-cultural approaches to STEM curriculum and resources (that make these subject areas relatable, normal, and familiar in the African contexts, instilling rather than negating cultural pride), especially in mathematics, have been tested and introduced into schools in Nigeria. The responses of other alumni suggest that this movement is gradually gathering momentum in sub-Saharan Africa.

Also highlighted was a community-based approach to social work that integrates a diversity of good practices within and outside cultures and leverages alumni expertise to develop virtual platforms and resources for teaching and research. Coordinating initiatives with non-academic stakeholders, particularly nongovernment organizations working in the area of girls' education and empowerment, was also discussed as a good practice. Similarly, another exemplary case showed how resources can be mobilized locally and the buy-in of key government bodies can be secured by aligning programs with the interests of non-university stakeholders (a graduate program in anthropology aligned to serve needs of the police department, supporting forensics, and tap into the resources of national parks administration). Participants discussed the use of online platforms and tools (e.g., using Zoom for online classes on research design, and utilizing MOOCs in teaching). The accessibility challenges relating to the use of online resources was also at the center of the discussions.

These and many more cases were discussed in the parallel sessions. While the papers are being curated for a separate publication, the main takeaways from the discussions are presented in the following section in the form of reflections.





# REFLECTIONS ON DAY 1



**T**he first part of the half-day session on day two was reflections on day one (to be followed by the future of higher education in Africa, and the future of diaspora engagement programs). This included a brief summary of the distilled key takeaway points mainly from the parallel discussions on day one. It also highlighted some of the critical questions that needed further interrogation individually or collectively by members of the African academic diaspora, by universities in the U.S. and Africa, by governments, or by institutions involved in academic diaspora engagement—such as IIE and Carnegie Corporation. The following are the main points of reflection from the discussions on day one.

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- **Alignment of goals/purposes at all levels is a critical success factor.** At the individual level, often several people show interest in supporting and being part of a project. However, as time goes on and the nitty-gritty details of implementation start to touch the ground, only those who see a real alignment between the project goals and their own career objectives or passion will continue to consistently support or even champion the project. The same can be said at the departmental or institutional levels. The extent to which the project is designed to fit into the strategies and long-term goals of the host department or institution will determine the commitment and availability of support and resources from the latter.

- **Understanding power relations is key for lasting engagement.** If one mantra comes out of all the discussions to encapsulate the success and challenges of engagement, it would be “relationship, relationship, relationship!” Building a reliable positive relationship begins with understanding the power dynamics in the context of the host institution. For example, one of the Fellows spoke about her experience in a higher education institution based in the military, where power is understood not only by academic rank and administrative position but

also by elements rooted in the military culture, such as seniority and chain of command. While this is a unique example, it sheds light on the importance of institutional culture and the diversity in the way power is defined, acquired, and leveraged. It should be noted that Fellows need to be aware of their own power, too. They must take account of the influence they have and articulate their responsibility thereof.

- **Trust is earned and it takes time. Building trust, with faculty at host institutions, responsible local government bodies, and other stakeholders, is another fundamental of a successful working relationship.** Emphasizing this point, one of the Fellows referred to his experience with drug development in his home country. It was evident to him that building on the existing indigenous knowledge—rather than starting from scratch—would leapfrog the process. However, it takes time and deliberate effort to gain the trust of the custodians of this localized knowledge for them to be comfortable enough to share what they know. Indigenous knowledge in this context is kept with few custodians and orally passed through generations. Similarly, relationships with government structures at different levels require a careful approach to build and maintain trust.



• **Resources are not always scarce—sometimes they just need to be reallocated.** Resources are often identified as one of the leading constraints in projects of diaspora engagement. One of the lessons from CADFP is how resource-sharing arrangements can be negotiated with hosting institutions. A more specific and teachable example came from one of the Fellows whose project for the development of a new graduate program struggled to get traction due to limited resource availability. He then restructured the project to appeal to stakeholders beyond the university and approached two influential bodies: the National Parks Authority and the National Police Department. He made the case for them to see all the benefits they could get from supporting the project. The buy-in from these two bodies brought significant resources to the project, along with national attention, which opened so many doors for its successful implementation.

• **Beware: technology bridges the gap, but it also creates gaps.** Even before the pandemic, the use of technology to virtually engage with students and faculty in home countries was emerging in conversations about diaspora engagement. Traveling thousands of miles to teach classes in person or support research and other activities is much more inconvenient and expensive than the virtual alternative, although it is undeniably more effective. The pandemic brought this fact forth in an unprecedented manner. Examples of how online technology has been employed to connect with students back home were presented, and the ease and convenience of these methods were discussed. However, counterexamples of how access to internet and the necessary digital devices creates gaps between students of different backgrounds were highlighted. The bottom line was, technology is a great force in bridging the physical gap between diaspora academics and students in home countries. However, it cannot be assumed that it always works the same way for everyone. Finding ways to reduce this gap is critical. For instance, encouraging and supporting universities (or departments) to have internet-connected devices where students can sit for virtual classes is one solution that appeared to work better, although this has become impractical during the pandemic.


• **Mentorship requires responsible engagement. One of the concepts that frequently came up in the discussions about mentorship was responsibility.** Responsibility was seen from two perspectives. First, mentorship has to be taken as a serious responsibility that requires genuine and continued engagement with the mentee, not just a casual interaction. It is important to understand the context and aspirations of the mentee and help them navigate the professional world so they can make the best of available resources and tools. This requires proper planning and frequent communication. Also, while fellowships might have a short span, mentorship requires longer-term relationships between mentors and mentees. As such, sustaining communication and support even after the end of a fellowship at the host institution is strongly advised.

• **The second aspect of responsibility is the ethics of mentorship.** There is no shortage of examples of unethical activities, from mentors having mentees do their job to mentors doing the work of their mentees in exchange for other benefits. An example where many graduate students were holding senior administrative positions in the same university was presented to demonstrate how the power dynamics in mentoring relationships could be complex, calling for a careful navigation of ethical boundaries. Mentorship is for both professional and personal development, so mentors need to set examples to their mentees on both fronts.

• **Policy advocacy and institutional change can have lasting impacts.** Fellowships are often focused on such activities as teaching, curriculum/program development, and research—mostly limited to what happens within the university. However, some have a broader focus of working with different stakeholders, including government, professional associations, and the private sector. Some Fellows have included policy advocacy as part of their engagement, seeking to have a wider impact. Examples of such efforts were discussed in such areas as drug development, public health, and mining, where Fellows leveraged their position and stature as diaspora academics and prominent scholars in their field to initiate and promote broader conversations on issues that deserve policy attention or changes in general practice. Some projects advocated for policy changes, government



***It is also equally important to come into the collaboration with an open mind, respect, and understanding. Fellows acknowledge that things have changed in many ways from how they knew them. They needed to reset their expectations and adapt their approach.***



investment, improved institutional infrastructure, etc. Others were considered successful pilots and were implemented across a number of institutions (sometimes at a national level), demonstrating the broad impact of diaspora engagement in higher education, and more specifically that of CADFP—the multiplier effect.

- **Decolonization: from blaming to taking responsibility.**

Decolonization was another concept that came up repeatedly in the conversations. Fellows spoke of their own experience of the colonized education system they went through or their own effort to decolonize education in Africa. Fellows mentioned several examples to illustrate the different manifestations of westernized education that are disconnected with real experiences of students and ultimately fail to address local problems. Within the broader conversations, initiatives that specifically targeted this issue were discussed. Some Fellows boldly acknowledged their own entrapment and the moral obligation that they carry. The key point: Decolonization of knowledge and higher education calls for action, and the academic diaspora is at the forefront. It is high time to move from decrying to taking responsibility and to practical action.

- **Starting with the low-hanging fruits with understanding and an open mind.** Many have big visions and big ambitions for their motherland. Big ambitions are great; they have big impact, but low-hanging fruits are practical, actionable, and immediate. Therefore, starting with what is in immediate reach and building up is more effective in creating momentum, gathering support,

and mobilizing resources. It is worthwhile to begin by analyzing what is within the reach of collaborations to accomplish. Considerations include differing priorities of African governments (higher education, research, and development might not be high on the list); corruption in society and within the ranks of higher education; and the time and investment required to build and sustain partnerships. For example, drug development is highly lucrative and could significantly expand public revenue but takes an average of 10 years; lack of political will, unstable regimes, and a policy vacuum are likely to stifle such initiatives, especially considering the huge investments in infrastructure they would require.

It is also equally important to come into the collaboration with an open mind, respect, and understanding. Fellows acknowledge that things have changed in many ways from how they knew them. They needed to reset their expectations and adapt their approach.

Treating local faculty with respect is a prerequisite to gaining their support. Understanding their circumstances and the multiple challenges they navigate is a key first step to building lasting relationships and turning faculty into allies.

# THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA



This session was aimed at drawing on the experience, knowledge, and observation of the diaspora academics at the convening to engage with the possible future of higher education in Africa. Participants were surveyed as to what they think will be the main opportunities and critical issues in the future of Africa's higher education. Participants also were engaged with a hypothetical scenario to try to identify what would be the most important areas of investment in the sector. Participants were divided into groups and asked to discuss the following three questions before sharing their findings with the larger audience:

- What are three opportunities for advancing African higher education?
- What are three critical issues facing African higher education which could be addressed by an investor (foundation, government, etc.)?
- If you had \$12 million per year to invest in African higher education, and three people to manage it, what would be your overall goal, and how would you invest it?

In the two-minute summary presentations, groups shared the outcomes of their discussions around the three questions. The presented outcomes exhibited significant similarities. The following are the top responses to each question.


***This session sought to survey the participants as to what they think will be the main opportunities and critical issues in the future of Africa's higher education.***

## Opportunities for advancing African higher education

Growing population and economy: Africa has a burgeoning young population. With more than half of its population under the age of 25, Africa is dubbed the youngest continent. Having the fastest population growth, the continent is also estimated to double its population by 2050, with about 1 billion people under the age of 25. This bulging young population means more demand for higher education. Africa is also the home of fast-growing economies. While the impact of COVID-19 remains to be seen, in the pre-pandemic years Africa had been consistently registering promising economic growth.

As economies grow and household income increases, there will be more demand for higher education. The growing population and economy also create greater opportunity and responsibility for higher education to engage with societal issues more meaningfully, through its functions of teaching, research, and community services.

**Technology as enabler:** African higher education has been enormously challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it has also learned a critical lesson about the potential of deploying technology in



facilitating the teaching-learning process. The current challenge has awakened higher education institutions and governments to the reality of the state of their technological infrastructure and to the critical force of technology in enhancing their efforts in improving higher education. It is reasonable to anticipate that there will be improvement in the level of attention given to technology as an enabling force in higher education. This creates opportunities for Africa's higher education to bolster its capacity and efficiency in its undertakings, and to expand access, which currently stands far behind the global average.

**Potential for research:** Africa accounts for a negligible portion of global research production. This is not due to the lack of potential. Researchers from elsewhere often come to Africa to do their field work and publish their results, but the continent itself hardly benefits. However, there is a growing interest among higher education stakeholders—including individual scholars, institutions, governments, and funding agencies—toward improved research productivity on the continent. On the other hand, the university-industry partnership in funding research is very limited. The growing interest in research can translate into better resource mobilization from different sources, mainly from government and private companies.

**Diaspora resources:** There is a growing recognition of the current and potential impact of the African diaspora, beyond their economic contribution in the form of remittance. This is expressed in numerous ways, including the growing number of countries developing diaspora policies and strategies and establishing responsible agencies or ministries, the level of emphasis international organizations and development partners place on the role of the diaspora, and the increasing number of initiatives supported by different parties. In

higher education, this can be seen in the nascent practice of both higher education institutions and concerned government agencies formally recognizing the academic diaspora as resources and strategic partners. Similarly, an increasing level of motivation can also be seen among the academic diaspora who are engaged individually and through institutionalized initiatives. The success of the CADFP can be noted as a witness of this potential. In sum, these developments present a considerable opportunity in the advancement of higher education which can be translated into better networking and enhanced capacity.

**Solidarity in purpose and coordination:** There is an overall positive spirit about higher education in Africa. Deviating from its ill-advised policy of deemphasizing, the continent is bringing higher education to center stage. This is visible in the activities of all major stakeholders, internal and external. Higher education has become a prominent subject in the politico-economic discourse. It is gaining priority as a policy agenda, attracting investment, and being emphasized by private foundations, multilateral organizations, and development partners. This mutual recognition of the importance of higher education is what one of the groups called "solidarity in purpose." This direction is further strengthened by the emergence of continental coordinating bodies such as the African Union and the AAU. Among others, the two institutions are playing increasingly critical roles in coordinating goals and efforts, such as in the 10-year Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)—a broad continent-wide strategic initiative covering multiple aspects of education, including at the tertiary level.

## Critical issues facing African higher education

**Poor infrastructure:** During the pandemic, African institutions were faced with the state of their technological infrastructure, which struggled to support virtual learning. Most were caught unprepared for the kind of transition the time demanded because of, among other things, insufficient investment in infrastructural development. Considering that: (a) access to higher education remains low across most of the continent, (b) access to lower-level education is improving, and (c) there is a growing demand due to changing demographic and economic factors, it is critical that higher education in Africa bolsters its capacity by enhancing its infrastructure. Without this critical investment in infrastructure, higher education would be challenged to progress at the expected pace to meet the demands of the continent.

**Capacity of faculty:** Another aspect of capacity both at the institutional and systemic level is the non-physical one: the qualification and competence of faculty. Many institutions in Africa suffer from limited human capacity for different reasons. First, many countries have been undertaking considerable expansion programs that were not matched with a similar pace of faculty development. Therefore, the number of faculty with terminal degrees and the appropriate experience is limited. Second, those faculty members with

better potential often leave seeking opportunities abroad or transition to the private sector, where they get better pay and working conditions. Third, many institutions have faced a mass retirement of senior faculty without the appropriate mechanism in place for their replacement. Fourth, faculty are generally constrained by different factors from using their potential to the fullest. Therefore, capacity of faculty, in both teaching and research, is a critical issue in the current state of higher education in Africa.

**Decolonization:** By and large, higher education in Africa has its roots in colonial times. Instituted by colonial powers, higher education remains disconnected with local realities (apart from traditional and religious schools, which have very limited intake and applicability to the labor market). Practically, this means the teaching-learning process pays no attention to the wealth of centuries-old indigenous knowledge. Instead, it relies on concepts and examples that are foreign to students' lives. As a result, the education system fails to address local problems, neglects local resources, and produces graduates with limited ability to bring about real change in their communities. The emancipation/decolonization of the education system is, therefore, a key step in making sure that any investment into the sector will produce the desired result in both economic and social areas.

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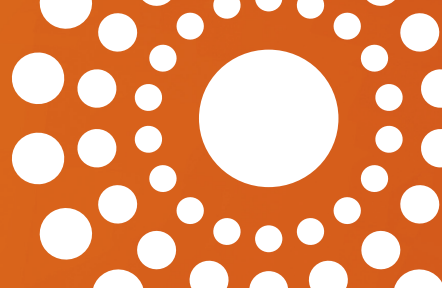
## Areas of potential investment

Given the details of the hypothetical question, the results of this part of the discussion related to tapping into the opportunities and addressing the issues identified earlier but constrained by the boundaries set. The following are the main areas of investment identified by the groups.

**Raising more resources.** The argument here is that \$12 million is not really a lot of resources to meaningfully impact such a vast higher education landscape. Therefore, the wise move would be leveraging the current resources to support initiatives that will raise more resources from different sources and directed to different activities. Besides investment by governments, creating schemes

for more private investment, encouraging the work of private foundations, and soliciting and encouraging African philanthropy have been proposed. The last idea was passionately advanced for its massive potential and its possible contribution in the decolonization effort.

**Improving research and development.** At the center of this plan is strengthening university-industry partnership, which is seen as a sustainable way of supporting research and development activities. This idea also encompasses the development of research ecosystems, which comprises research-oriented graduate programs as elemental components.



**Investing in centers of excellence.** Building on current experiences with centers of excellence in different parts of the continent, focusing on different disciplines, this plan emphasizes the contextualization of knowledge as its primary purpose. With innovative and entrepreneurial programs, the centers of excellence will focus on translating knowledge into practical solutions relevant to their localities. Equally important are the development and integration of indigenous knowledge into the formal and informal curricula.

**Support for students with disabilities.** While this is an important subject, it is largely deemphasized in both policy dialogues and areas for potential investment. Sometimes, it is blended with the overall conversation about improving the learning experience for students from marginalized backgrounds, but that fails to do justice to the subject.

**Building digital resources.** Investment in technological infrastructure and building digital resources is key in improving both teaching and research.

**Knowledge remittance.** One of the great resources for the improvement of higher education in Africa lies in its diaspora. Making a concerted effort to create the institutional mechanisms through which members of the academic diaspora engage with African institutions and academics is an important area of investment. The experiences of programs such as CADFP are highlighted as a basis to justify further investment.

**Facilitating collaboration.** International collaboration with like-minded institutions is identified as another key area of investment that could produce long-term benefits. In this regard, collaborations with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and land grant institutions are noted to have greater potential. The former institutions are considered to have a sizable number of African-born faculty and share the same overarching spirit with the African diaspora, which translates into an interest to have stronger links with Africa and its institutions. This interest is frequently expressed in internationalization strategies and other documents, and members of the academic diaspora—especially those who work in HBCUs—are called to encourage the articulation of such interests. Land

grant institutions are sought for their (historical) focus on technical and vocational education.

**Capacity building.** Admittedly, capacity building is a broad term that can apply to several areas. It has been discussed that African higher education institutions and systems suffer from limited capacities in various areas. This broad proposal presumes specific focuses in the following areas, and more, depending on the circumstances and priorities for the respective institution/system:

- Faculty development
- Leadership and management of academic institutions and units
- Strengthening of professional associations and their role in higher education
- Government and independent agencies concerned with quality and relevance
- Building of networks and consortiums of institutions

Overall, it is underscored that while the exercise is meant to survey opinions of the CADFP alumni at the convening, where to invest is always highly context-dependent. It is equally important that setting priorities for investment must come from the local stakeholders of the respective higher education institution/system.



***With innovative and entrepreneurial programs, the centers of excellence will focus on translating knowledge into practical solutions relevant to their localities. Equally important are the development and integration of indigenous knowledge into the formal and informal curricula.***



# FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

## AREAS OF DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA



**A**nother discussion used a similar format to explore potential areas of advancement in diaspora engagement in Africa. Participants were asked to discuss in smaller groups and share their findings with the larger audience. Prospects are discussed in various areas reflecting on who can play what role to enhance diaspora engagement programs in higher education in Africa. The different points discussed can be summarized as follows, based on the potential contribution of major actors.

### Governments

The role of government is duly stressed for its direct multidimensional influence. First, governments make policies and establish institutions that enable diaspora engagement in all areas. In this regard, encouraging trends have been observed by attendees in recent years as many African countries have come out with diaspora engagement policies and strategies, with specific institutions identified to lead and coordinate efforts. Second, governments also allocate resources for different initiatives. Besides the direct public funding governments can put into concerned institutions and their initiatives, it is suggested that earmarking a certain percentage of remittance income can be a potentially significant and sustainable way of resourcing diaspora engagement in higher education and research. This can be a promising source, given that many African countries have seen steadily growing remittances in the recent past. Funding from such sources can also be matched by the government.

Third, governments can use various instruments to encourage private foundations, companies, and members of the diaspora to invest in promoting knowledge remittance. For instance, governments can use tax

considerations to encourage private companies to invest in this area. Public-private partnership platforms can be used to complement resources and coordinate efforts. Government support for private sector companies whose services are directly related to the engagement process—such as banks and telecom—can be another consideration. Competitive funding can also be used to encourage higher education institutions to take a more strategic approach toward diaspora engagement.

***Earmarking a certain percentage of remittance income can be a potentially significant and sustainable way of resourcing diaspora engagement in higher education and research.***



## Private foundations and companies

In the meantime, a stronger push and a more coordinated engagement is also expected from private bodies. Philanthropy and corporate donation are rarely known in the African higher education space. However, there is massive potential for resource mobilization with multinational companies, domestic private companies, and wealthy individuals. These parties can participate in academic diaspora engagement in different ways, including creating endowments, developing fellowship programs, and matching resources in the efforts by universities, government, or private foundations. Private foundations such as Carnegie Corporation can also help by sharing their experiences and supporting local institutions in replicating the foundations' successful programs.

## Continental bodies

Multilateral organizations, development agencies, and associations, as well as continental and regional bodies, are potential contributors to the future of diaspora engagement. With their broad reach and influence, these institutions can promote diaspora engagement in higher education. The African Union is acknowledged for its efforts in recognizing the role of the diaspora as a major development partner of the continent and incorporating a designated unit in its structure. Participants encouraged others to follow the example. Participants also commended the collaboration between the African Union (AU) and the Association of African Universities, as mentioned in the keynote address on Day 1 of the convening. On the other hand, the African Development Bank has a broad mandate to support development of the continent, so the Bank can do more by investing in relevant initiatives.

## The African diaspora

Participants of the convening emphasized the irreplaceable role of the African diaspora, and the CADFP alumni in particular. For decades many academics in the diaspora have been trying, with varying levels of success, to connect with and support African institutions, even in the absence of a convenient policy environment or any meaningful support from government or other bodies. With recent developments in the interest of governments and support by various actors, such as the CADF, the level of motivation and participation among the diaspora is also seeing an increase. Members of the diaspora are encouraged to bolster their engagement by taking practical actions. The creation of an umbrella diaspora organization focused on higher education can be a major step in the right direction. Such an organization would have a critical role as interlocutor between the diaspora and African institutions, but it could also:

- Coordinate activities among the diaspora and with other organizations focused on higher education in Africa
- Raise funds to support initiatives (this would require formal registration as a nonprofit)
- Identify and engage champions
- Devise mechanisms (e.g., organizing cultural events and cultural tourism) to ensure the continuity of engagement among subsequent generations of the diaspora
- Advocate for policy changes at different levels in host and home countries
- Represent the interest of the diaspora in different arenas



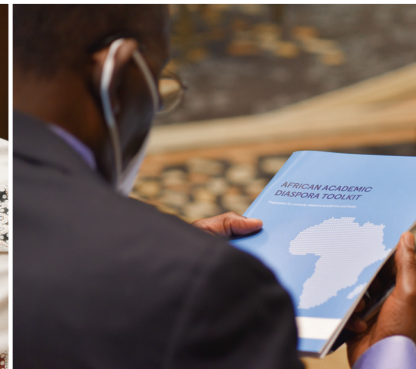
# CONCLUSION

Overall, the convening concluded on a positive note, with acknowledgments of the potential for diaspora engagement in higher education. Participants commended Carnegie and IIE for their accomplishments through CADFP and their multiplier effects. The two organizations were strongly encouraged to continue their engagement with African higher education.

Broadly, participants argued for continued engagement of CADFP alumni—with the fellowship or otherwise. Alumni are urged to ethically engage and inspire the next generation of academics, both at home and in Africa. They are encouraged to leverage their positions in their home institutions and their other affiliations to the cause of advancing higher education in Africa. They are also called upon to work in a more organized and self-sustained manner, not only in their work with universities and academics in Africa, but also engaging with concerned government bodies at different levels and professional associations for a wider and deeper impact.

***Alumni are urged to ethically engage and inspire the next generation of academics, both at home and in Africa.***





# Acknowledgements

The Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP) would like to acknowledge the leadership and contributions of the Alumni Steering Committee: Dr. Esther Obonyo, Pennsylvania State University; Prof. Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika, University of Alberta; Dr. Michael Olabisi, University of Michigan; Prof. Kefa M. Otiso, Bowling Green State University; and Dr. Jasmine Renner, East Tennessee State University.

The CADFP would like to acknowledge the work of the Folio Editor, Mr. Jeremy Coats, Institute of International Education, and the contributions and support of Ms. Claudia Frittelli, Carnegie Corporation of New York. Thanks to Mr. Christopher Carson and Ms. Jahnissi Tirado, Institute of International Education, for their editorial assistance.

To CADFP Host and Fellow Alumni whose collaborations have made this Folio possible.

This Folio was made possible through a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Carnegie African  
Diaspora Fellowship  
Program Alumni Convening

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# Conference Papers Selection Process

Abstracts for conference papers were submitted to the Institute of International Education in 2020 as part of an open call to all Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP) Diaspora Scholars. After a review of abstracts, the Alumni Steering Committee selected 53 for development into papers for presentation and workshopping at the CADFP 2021 Alumni Convening from October 21-23, 2021, in Washington, D.C. Following The Convening, 38 submissions were reviewed and approved for publication in this Folio.

When citing this Folio, use *Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP) Alumni Convening Folio (Fall 2023)*.



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**38 conference papers** were approved for publication in this folio



# Building and enhancing research, teaching and service capacity of host universities: what works?

*Building Sustainable Partnerships Between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and African Universities (AUs): The Case of Virginia State University and University of Lagos*

**Dr. Adeyemi A. Adekoya**

Virginia State University  
Fellow at the University of Lagos, Spring 2016, Fall 2017, and Fall 2019

*Reflections on Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP) Sponsorship to Enhance Geospatial Technologies for Social Science Research in Africa*

**Dr. Samuel Adu-Prah**

Sam Houston State University  
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*Advancing Faculty and Clinical Preceptor Skills: Opportunity for African Diaspora Skill-transfer*

**Dr. Emilia Iwu**

Rutgers University  
Fellow at Imo State University, Spring 2016, and The University of Calabar, Fall 2019

**Dr. Julia Ugorji**

Howard University  
Fellow at Imo State University, Spring 2016

**Dr. Martina Ezeama**

Imo State University  
Host Fellow, Spring 2016

**Boniface Agwunobi**

Imo State University Teaching Hospital

*Enhancing Research Productivity Through Institutional Culture and Internal Policy Changes in Sub-Saharan African Universities*

**Dr. Faith Maina**

Texas Tech University  
Fellow at Tangaza University, Summer 2018

*Capacity Building at the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria: Enhancing the Chemistry Undergraduate and Postgraduate Curricula, and Improving Research Capabilities*

**Dr. Abdul K. Mohammed**

North Carolina Central University  
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*Promoting an Infrastructure of Trust Among Trainers: Implications on Academic Best-Practices in Nigerian Universities*

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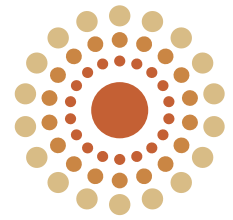
Max Rady College of Medicine Immunology, University of Manitoba  
Fellow at the University of Abuja, Spring 2016

**Dr. Shirley Thompson**

University of Manitoba

**Dr. Valentine O. Onwunjiogu**

Veritas University  
Host Fellow, Fall 2019



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**Dr. Funke Oba**

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Fellow at the University of Lagos, Spring 2018

*Benefits and Challenges of CADFP  
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**Dr. Zacchaeus Ogunnika**

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*Leveraging e-Learning Technologies  
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Sacred Heart, Gulu, Fall 2017

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**Joseph Adum**

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Fellow at University of Cape Coast,  
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**Dr. Robert Dibia**

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**Dr. Amiso M. George**

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*Mentorship: Bridging, Balancing, and Building Synergistic Scholarly Activities*

**Dr. Penina Kamina**

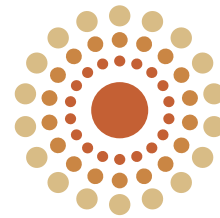
State University of New York, Oneonta  
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**Dr. Winnie Mucherah**

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The University of Uyo, Spring 2021

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**Christie Akwaowo**

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**Dr. Grace Ukasoanya**

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**Dr. Grace Legbeti**

Nigerian Defense Academy, Nigeria

**Dr. Hauwa Imogie**

Nigerian Defense Academy, Nigeria

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**Dr. Pauline Ada Uwakweh**

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Fellow at Redeemer's University, Fall 2016

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**Dr. Wakiuru Wamwara**

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**Dr. Adeboye Adejare**

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**Dr. Samuel Mugo**

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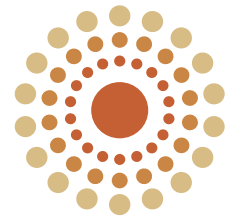
**Dr. Korbla P. Puplambu**

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**Dr. Benjamin Mwashote**

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Missouri State University  
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**Dr. Margaret L. Khaitsa**

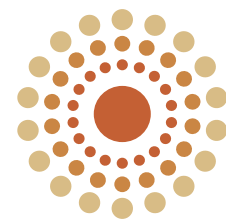
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Lira University, Spring 2020



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**Dr. Robert A. Baffour**

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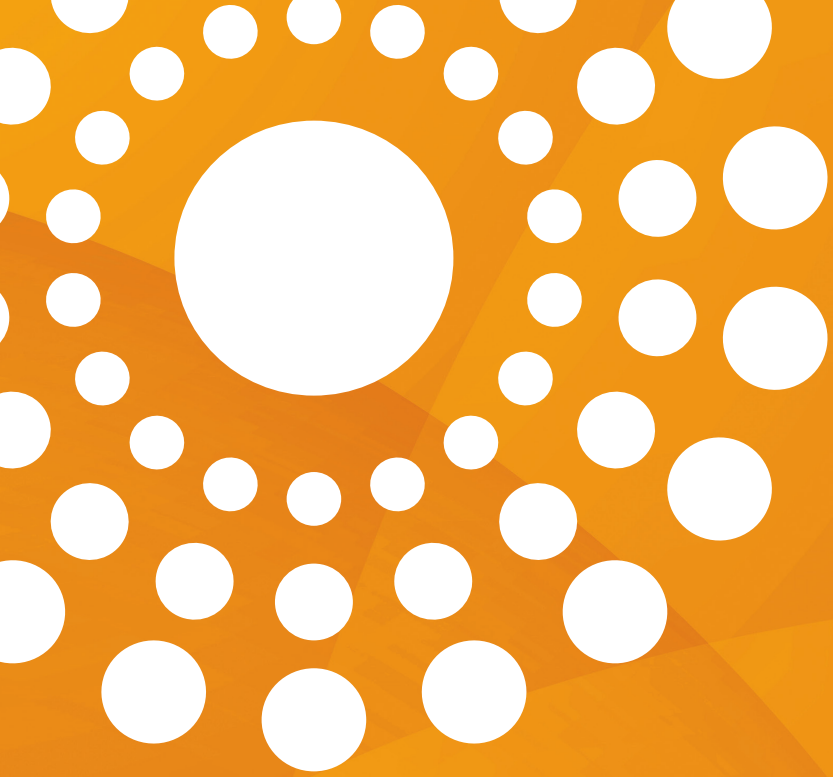
College of Veterinary Medicine,  
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**Dr. Thobias Sando**

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The Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP) is funded by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY).



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