



ARUA
African Research
Universities Alliance

ARUA QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ARUA QUARTERLY

Insights. Updates. Impact.

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(April – June 2026)



**SECOND AFRICA-EUROPE
CORE CONFERENCE**
14-17 June 2026

African Union
European Union
Research Universities
Alliance

The Guild

ARUA
African Research
Universities Alliance





VISION

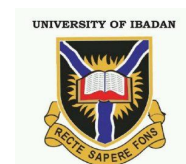
To strengthen African universities through effective capacity building that comes from working together with a view to increasing significantly their research output.



MISSION

To make African researchers and institutions globally competitive while contributing to the generation of knowledge for socio-economic transformation in Africa.

ARUA MEMBER UNIVERSITIES



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This issue shines the spotlight on the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Urbanisation and Habitable Cities (UHC), showcasing how innovative research, policy engagement and strategic partnerships are helping build more inclusive, resilient and sustainable African cities.

THE ARUA NOTICEBOARD

Stay up-to-date with upcoming fellowship opportunities, research calls, webinars, conferences and other announcements designed to connect the ARUA community with new opportunities for collaboration, learning and research impact.

SECTION 1: FEATURE STORY

FROM NETWORKS TO IMPACT: ARUA-GUILD PARTNERSHIP DRIVING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE ACROSS AFRICA AND EUROPE

Across the world, universities are increasingly being called upon to address complex challenges that transcend national borders. These challenges encompass climate change, food insecurity, public health crises, technological disruption, and widening social inequalities. No single institution, country or continent can tackle these challenges alone. The future of research and innovation depends on collaboration.

Yet collaboration alone is not enough. Increasingly, attention is shifting towards a more fundamental question: *how can international research partnerships become more equitable, impactful and sustainable?*

The partnership between the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities is helping to answer that question. By bringing together leading universities from Africa and Europe, the two networks are advancing a new model of collaboration—one built on shared leadership, co-created research agendas, mutual learning, and long-term capacity strengthening.

At a time when global challenges demand global solutions, the ARUA-Guild partnership is demonstrating that excellence and equity can go hand in hand.



The ARUA-Guild high-level meeting held at the Berlaymont building, the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, towards the formation of the Clusters.

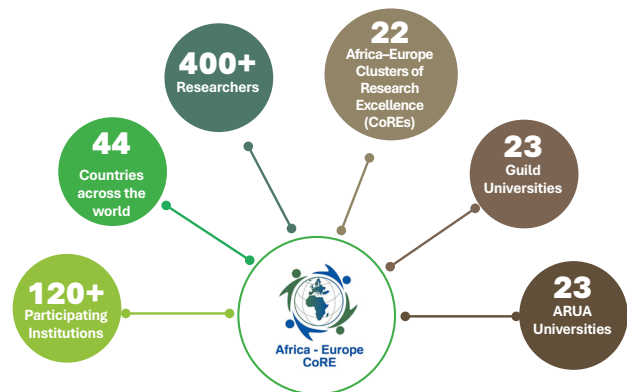
The Power of Networks

Established in 2015, ARUA has grown into Africa's foremost network of research-intensive universities, bringing together leading institutions committed to strengthening research excellence, postgraduate training and innovation across the continent. Through its Centres of Excellence and continental research programmes, ARUA provides a platform for universities to work collectively on challenges that matter to Africa and the world.

The Guild represents some of Europe's most research-intensive universities, united by a commitment to advancing excellent research, innovation and higher education. Recognising the importance of stronger Africa-Europe cooperation, ARUA and The Guild forged a strategic partnership founded on a shared belief that addressing global challenges requires genuine collaboration between institutions on both continents.

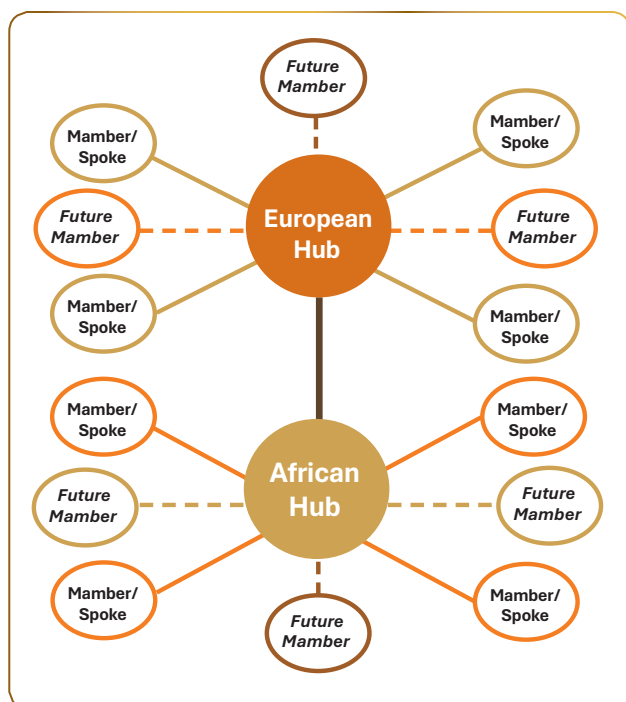
Today, that partnership has evolved into one of the largest and most ambitious Africa-Europe research collaborations in the world.

ARUA-Guild Partnership at a Glance

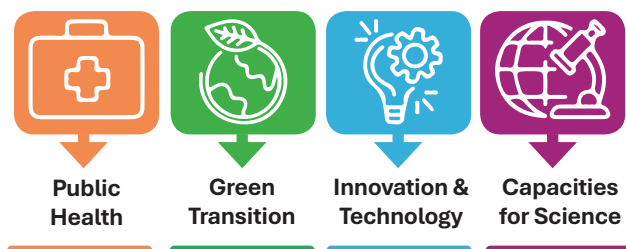


At the heart of the partnership are the Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoREs).

The CoREs operate under an interconnected Hub and Spoke model that brings together researchers from both continents around shared thematic priorities. The Hub welcomes new member institutions based on their interests and strengths.



The clusters span four strategic areas as depicted below:



Under the four broad strategic focus areas lie various research themes ranging from pandemics and genomics to climate resilience, artificial intelligence, sustainable food systems and social transformation. The broad research themes have informed multi-trans-interdisciplinary collaborations beyond African and European

Universities. The researchers have teamed up to apply for large, medium, and even small grants from various funding agencies. Even when grant applications are unsuccessful, strong teams and collaborations are built through grant-writing experiences. The co-leads for each CoRE are drawn from African and European institutions. Some of the co-leads also serve as directors of the ARUA centres of excellence.

Beyond Research: Building Capacity for the Future

What distinguishes the ARUA–Guild partnership is that it is not only about generating knowledge but equally about strengthening the people and institutions that produce it. Across the CoREs, collaboration is intentionally linked to capacity development. Researchers work together through joint projects, collaborative publications, doctoral supervision, staff exchanges, training schools, and mentorship programmes. These activities help strengthen research ecosystems while creating opportunities for the next generation of African and European scholars.

For African universities in particular, capacity building extends beyond individual researchers. The partnership contributes to strengthening research management systems, grant administration, ethics review processes, postgraduate training, and institutional leadership.

BUILDING PEOPLE, NOT JUST PROJECTS:

The ARUA–Guild partnership is investing in the next generation of researchers through:

- ✓ Early-Career Researcher fellowships
- ✓ Doctoral and postdoctoral training
- ✓ Mentorship by leading African and European scholars
- ✓ Research mobility and exchange opportunities
- ✓ Leadership development programmes
- ✓ Collaborative international research networks



Members of the CoRE on Advanced Infectious Diseases Research and Training Connect at the CoREs Conference in Glasgow.

By investing in both people and systems, the collaboration seeks to create lasting institutional capacity that endures beyond individual projects.

This commitment to capacity strengthening reflects ARUA's broader vision of building globally competitive African universities capable of generating knowledge, shaping policy, and driving innovation.

Redefining Africa–Europe Partnerships

For many years, international research collaborations often followed donor–recipient models in which research priorities, funding decisions and leadership structures were largely concentrated outside Africa.

The ARUA–Guild partnership seeks to move beyond this approach.

Through the CoREs and other collaborative initiatives, African and European partners jointly identify research priorities, co-design programmes, share leadership responsibilities, and contribute to decision-making. Research questions are shaped by both global scientific priorities and local realities, ensuring that solutions are relevant, contextually grounded and capable of generating meaningful impact.

This shift may seem subtle, but it is transformative. It positions African universities not merely as sites where research happens, but as institutions that actively shape the global research agenda.

The result is a partnership model that recognises the diversity of both continents as a strength and values different forms of expertise, knowledge, and experience.

Responding to a Changing World

The importance of equitable partnerships has become even more apparent in recent years. Climate change, pandemics, food insecurity, migration, digital transformation and rapid advances in artificial intelligence are reshaping societies across the globe. At the same time, geopolitical shifts and evolving funding landscapes are changing how research is conducted and supported.

In this environment, research partnerships must become more resilient, more inclusive, and more strategic.

The ARUA–Guild partnership offers a framework for responding to these challenges. By connecting expertise across continents, strengthening institutional capacity and promoting shared ownership of research agendas, the partnership is helping universities generate solutions that are both globally relevant and locally grounded.

Importantly, it is also creating opportunities for African universities to contribute more actively to regional and global conversations on science, innovation and development.

Shaping the Future Together

The journey from partnership to transformation is still unfolding. Yet the progress achieved over the past few years demonstrates what is possible when institutions commit to long-term collaboration based on trust, mutual respect and shared ambition.

As ARUA and The Guild continue to deepen their engagement, the focus is increasingly shifting towards sustainability, impact and influence. Future efforts will seek to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, expand opportunities for researchers, mobilise new resources, and enhance universities' contribution to policy and societal change.

Ultimately, the ARUA–Guild partnership is about more than research. It is about building the scientific capacity, leadership and institutional foundations needed to address the challenges of the twenty-first century.

In doing so, it offers an important lesson for global higher education: the most effective partnerships are not those built on dependency, but those founded on shared purpose, shared leadership, and shared success.

Three Years of Progress

The maturity of the ARUA–Guild partnership is perhaps best illustrated by the progress achieved through the 22 Africa–Europe Clusters of Research Excellence. This progress was recently reviewed by researchers, university leaders and strategic partners during the Second CoRE Conference, which provided an opportunity to reflect on achievements, lessons learnt, and

future priorities for Africa–Europe collaboration. The conference reaffirmed the transformative potential of equitable partnerships in advancing research excellence, capacity building, and societal impact. Highlights from the conference are presented in a separate section of this newsletter (**Read more in section 3: ARUA in the Marketplace – ‘CoRE Conference 2026’**)



A joint meeting of the ARUA-Guild Leadership at the CoREs Conference in Glasgow.

Beyond principles, the ARUA-Guild collaboration has already given rise to concrete Africa–Europe partnerships that illustrate what equitable cooperation looks like in practice. These include joint mentorship and mobility schemes for early-career researchers, collaborative applications to major funders such as the Wellcome Trust, Horizon Europe, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, and Erasmus+, and capacity-building initiatives such as the fellowship on Mpox and Lassa Fever that strengthen institutional systems on both continents. Communities of Practice for research managers have emerged as important vehicles for sharing expertise on grant management and research governance, while joint conferences, which are expected to produce a common-ground communiqué for advocacy, provide visible platforms for co-creating agendas and amplifying African and European voices together.

Towards a model for global research collaboration

Looking ahead, the ARUA–Guild partnership offers a potential model for global research collaboration that combines excellence with fairness and ambition with mutual respect. As universities and funders seek to reform international cooperation, the ARUA-Guild model illustrates a practical pathway: co-creation of agendas, shared leadership, sustained institutional strengthening, and long-term investment in human capital.

If more partnerships adopt these principles, global research could become more diverse, more responsive to local realities and better equipped to address complex challenges. In such a configuration, African universities occupy a central position as co-authors of knowledge rather than peripheral implementers, contributing both to the advancement of science and to the development of robust, contextually informed policy and practice.

SECTION 2: ARUA'S CAPACITY & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

In partnership with



PROGRESS ON ARUA EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS FELLOWSHIP

Andrew Carnegie
FOUNDATION

The ARUA Early Career Researchers Fellowship Programme, supported by the Mastercard Foundation and the Andrew Carnegie Foundation (previously, Carnegie Corporation of New York) continued to make steady progress in Quarter 2. The inaugural cohort of 37 fellows, comprising 26 women and 11 men, hosted at the various ARUA Centres of Excellence, completed their six-month fellowships.

During Quarter 2, the fellows undertook their proposed research activities and benefited from intensive capacity-building and mentorship activities at their host Centres of Excellence.



Dr. Francisca Adoma Acheampong gathers data in her field experiments.

Research Outputs by the Early Career Researchers

As the first cohort wound up their six-month fellowship, key outputs were realised, including peer-reviewed publications, conference papers, and research blogs.

1
Peer-reviewed

1
Policy Brief

9
Blogs

9
Conference Papers

Together, these contributions showcase the growing intellectual footprint of ARUA Early Career Researchers from various ARUA centres of excellence in governance, climate and development, urbanisation, energy, health, skills development, sustainable food systems, and post-conflict societies. They also demonstrate the value of the ARUA ECR Fellowship in supporting researchers to generate knowledge that is not only academically rigorous, but also accessible, policy-relevant and responsive to real challenges facing African societies.

A summary of research outputs from ARUA Early Career Researchers



Dr. Emmanuel Ameyaw: (CoE for Unemployment and Skills Development/University of Lagos: **Peer reviewed paper:** 'Productivity and employment in Africa: Examining differences across different income groups'. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2110701726000363?via%3Dihub> (*International Economics*, Elsevier)



Dr. Grace Oladunni: (CoE for Post-Conflict Societies/Addis Ababa University) **Policy Brief:** 'Intentionality or Lethargy: Education Through a Peace and Security Lens' African Solutions (AfSol Journal): <https://ipss-addis.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Policy-Brief-Intentionality-or-Lethargy.pdf>

Early Career Researchers' Blogs

Dr. Dedan Luvaga: (CoE for Good Governance/Addis Ababa University). 'Post-2010 Devolution Paradox in Kenya'. Regional Studies Association (RSA) <https://www.regionalstudies.org/rsa-blog/2026-blog-post-2010-devolution-paradox-in-kenya/>

Dr. Janet Appiah Osei: (CoE for Climate and Development/University of Ghana). 'Ghana's transport system is chaotic: how it can move more people with fewer vehicles – research'. The Conversation Africa, <https://theconversation.com/ghanas-transport-system-is-chaotic-how-it-can-move-more-people-with-fewer-vehicles-research-278810>

Dr. Williams Miller Appau: (CoE for Urbanisation and Habitable Cities/University of Lagos). 'Powering the Future: Why Ghana Must Turn Shopping Malls into Engines of Urban Energy Reform'. ARUA Blog Spot. <https://arua.org/powering-the-future/>

Dr. Osariemen Omoruyi-Aigbovo: (CoE for Climate and Development/University of Cape Town). Carbon Emissions and The Future of Nigeria's Insurance Industry. Business Day. <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/carbon-emissions-and-the-future-of-nigerias-insurance-industry/>

Dr. Precious Joan Wapukha: (CoE for Urbanisation and Habitable Cities/University of Lagos). Invisible in the City: Sudanese Refugees in Kenya Deserve Dignity, Not Silence. ARUA Blog Spot. <https://arua.org/invisible-in-the-city>

Dr. Mwende Mbilo. (CoE for Materials, Energy and Nanotechnology/University of the Witwatersrand). 'Africa has the sun. But are we harnessing it safely?' <https://arua.org/africa-has-the-sun-but-are-we-harnessing-it-safely/>

Dr. Cynthia Mwau: (CoE for Unemployment and Skills Development/University of Lagos). 'Is Technology a Job Thief or a Job Creator?' ARUA Blog Spot <https://arua.org/is-technology-a-job-thief-or-a-job-creator/>

Dr. Onyekachi Ewa Ibe: (CoE for Non-Communicable Diseases/University of Nairobi). 'Reimagining Breast Cancer in Africa: When Science Meets Reality.' ARUA Blog Spot. <https://arua.org/reimagining-breast-cancer-in-africa-when-science-meets-reality/>

Dr. Ravaka Felandranja Andriatsitohanina. (CoE for Climate and Development/University of Ghana). ARUA Blog Spot. <https://arua.org/can-agricultural-waste-save-our-soils-how-biochar-can-help-farmers-fight-soil-erosion/>

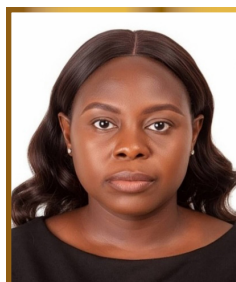
Conference papers presented at Intra-Africa International Conferences



Dr. Ravaka F. Andriatsitohaina: (CoE Climate and Development/University of Ghana).
Paper Title: Optimising Biochar Application to Enhance Water Retention and Reduce Runoff and Erosion in Tropical Ferralitic Soils under Simulated Rainfall.
Conference Details: US-Africa Science in the Savanna Conference, Nairobi, Kenya (13 – 16 April, 2026).



Dr. Cynthia Mwende Mwau: (CoE for Unemployment and Skills Development/University of Lagos).
Paper Title: Harnessing AI for personalised and multi-vocational skills learning and improved employability among marginalised youth.
Conference Details: US-Africa Science in the Savanna Conference, Nairobi, Kenya (13 – 16 April, 2026).



Dr. Onyekachi Ewa Ibe: (CoE for Non-Communicable Diseases/University of Nairobi).
Paper Title: Point-of-Care Coagulation Biomarkers for Risk Stratification and Metastatic Prediction in Breast Cancer during Pandemic Conditions.
Conference Details: 5th Point of Care Testing (POCT) Africa Conference 2026, Cape Town, South Africa 21- 22 April, 2026.



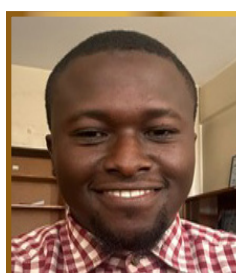
Dr. Dedan Luvaga: (CoE for Good Governance/Addis Ababa University).
Paper Title: The Paradox of Socio-economic Decentralisation: A Youth Perspective of Devolution in Kenya.
Conference Details: The Spirit of Bandung at 71: African Liberation and Anti-Colonial Solidarities in Contemporary Perspective, Thohoyandou, South Africa 21 April 2026.



Dr. Dorothy Khasisi Lukhabi: (CoE for Climate and Development/University of Ghana)
Paper Title: Intersecting Inequalities and Climate Maladaptation: Rethinking Sea Defence-Induced Vulnerability in Coastal Ghana
Conference Details: 11th Our Ocean Conference (OOC11), Mombasa, Kenya, 14 – 16 June 2026



Dr. Ntombifuthi Precious Nzimande: (CoE for Climate and Development/University of Nairobi)
Paper Title: The impacts of floods in relation to the SDGs in South Africa: a systematic review
Conference Details: IGU Commission on African Studies Conference, Windhoek, Namibia, 10 – 12 June 2026



Dr. Mujittapha Umar Sirajo: (CoE for Non-Communicable Diseases/University of Nairobi).
Paper Title: Vitamin D3 and vitamin A mitigate anhedonia and motivational deficits while preserving mesocorticolimbic integrity in a mouse model of dopaminergic system dysfunction.
Conference Details: International Behavioural Neuroscience Society, Cape Town, South Africa, 23 – 27 June, 2026.



Dr. Osariemen Omoruyi-Aigbovo: (CoE for Climate and Development/University of Cape Town).
Paper Title: Sustainable Financing and Carbon Emission in Nigeria **Conference.**
Details: Faculty of Management Science Annual International Conference, Lagos, Nigeria, 10-12 June, 2026.



Dr. Fawziyah Oyefunke Olorinoye: (CoE for Sustainable Food Systems/University of Pretoria).

Paper Title: Hydrogen from Biomass Waste for Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)-Hydrate Water Purification: A Sustainable Water-Energy Nexus for Mining-Impacted Communities in Ghana.

Conference Details: Southern African Sustainable Energy Conference (SASEC 2026). Skukuza, South Africa, 24 – 26, June 2026.

These outputs from ECRs demonstrate the programme's contribution to the objective of building the capacity of the next generation of African researchers who will drive the continent's transformation by generating the required knowledge and innovation to inform policy and action.



Dr. Onyekachi Ibe at the 5th Point of Care Testing Africa Conference in Cape Town, South Africa

Recruitment of cohort 2 Early Career Researchers

Recruitment and placement of cohort 2 fellows (batch 1) began after the first of two application deadlines for the call for applications lapsed on 22nd January 2026. The call is still open with the second application deadline set for July 15.

A total of 32 ECRs have been recruited and placed at the various ARUA Centres of Excellence and Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence. A total of 26 ECRs (12 female and 14 male) were recruited under the Mastercard Foundation programme, and six (2 female and 4 male) under the Andrew Carnegie Foundation (formerly the Carnegie Corporation of New York) Fellowship programme.

Most of the fellows have already reported to their host institutions and are expected to complete their fellowship between September and October 2026.

The ARUA secretariat organised a briefing session for the fellows on 10th June to welcome them to the fellowship. The session also highlighted the fellows' responsibilities during

the fellowship and the expected outputs at the end of the fellowship. Support from ARUA, planned activities, and opportunities for the fellows were also discussed. The fellows were encouraged to be proactive and fully utilise the opportunities provided by the fellowship to advance their career goals.

MIDDLE CAREER RESEARCHERS FELLOWSHIP

ARUA is expanding its capacity and skills development portfolio through the planned launch of the Pilot Mid-Career Research Fellowships for 2026–2027, supported by the Andrew Carnegie Foundation (formerly Carnegie Corporation of New York). The fellowship responds to a critical gap in Africa's research career pipeline. Mid-career academics (mostly Senior Lecturers and Associate Professors) are often expected to provide research leadership, supervise graduate students, mentor early-career scholars, and lead institutional initiatives. However, at this level, they are often loaded with heavy teaching, administrative, and service responsibilities that limit time for sustained research productivity.

The pilot programme will support up to ten middle-career researchers at the associate professor level with demonstrated post-PhD (or equivalent) experience, who are based at ARUA universities. Those successful will undertake six-month research-intensive sabbatical placements between September 2026 and August 2028. Fellows will be hosted outside their home countries, where possible, to promote cross-institutional knowledge exchange, interdisciplinary innovation, and stronger intra-African and Africa–Europe research networks.

The fellowship is expected to enable mid-career scholars to consolidate their research leadership and generate high-impact scholarly and policy-relevant outputs by providing them with protected time, structured support, and access to research-intensive institutions/centres, including the ARUA's Centres of Excellence and Africa–Europe Clusters of Research Excellence.

The fellowship is expected to contribute to joint publications, collaborative grant applications, doctoral supervision, mentorship of early-career researchers, public engagement, and knowledge translation through seminars, policy dialogues, blogs, and ARUA platforms. In doing so, it will strengthen ARUA's broader strategic goals of advancing African research excellence, improving

research training and mentorship, and increasing Africa's contribution to globally competitive knowledge production.

In the first quarter of 2026, ARUA partnered with Universitas 21 (U21) to support middle-career researchers from ARUA universities through the U21 Mid-Career Researcher (MCR) Programme. The partnership saw three MCRs from ARUA Universities benefit from the programme. The four-week online leadership and development programme seeks to equip participants with the mindset, skills, and confidence to lead creative, resilient, and collaborative research cultures.

By bringing together academics from diverse disciplines and regions, the programme exposed fellows to new ways of thinking, working, and leading. The beneficiaries report greater confidence in fostering interdisciplinary partnerships, engaging stakeholders more meaningfully, and embedding collaborative approaches into their research from the outset. The fellows appreciated that meaningful innovation often emerges not from working in isolation, but from engaging with others whose experiences and expertise challenge their assumptions and broaden their thinking.



"The fellowship has equipped me with clarity, confidence, and a stronger sense of purpose—empowering me to pursue research that is rigorous, imaginative, and responsive to realworld challenges" **Dr. Irene Kafui Vorsah Amponsah** (Senior Lecturer, Department of Statistics, University of Cape Coast, Ghana)

They acknowledged that the fellowship granted them an opportunity to pause, learn and reimagine what it means to lead as mid-career researchers.

THE MAV+ FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

The New Africa-Europe Partnership to Strengthen Research on Mpox and Lassa Fever recorded significant progress in Quarter 2 of 2026 as the inaugural cohort of fellows completed their bi-

continental research placements and delivered their first translational outputs.

Jointly led by ARUA, The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities, and Enabel, with technical support from Africa CDC and funding from the Government of Belgium, the initiative aims to strengthen Africa's capacity in translational research and vaccine development while advancing African-led solutions to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.

The inaugural cohort brought together seven early- and mid-career researchers from Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Malawi, representing expertise in virology, immunology, epidemiology, genomics, molecular diagnostics, public health, and vaccine research.



The seven fellows and some of the mentors during the training week at the University of Bern.

Through placements ranging from one to six weeks, fellows undertook tailored research residencies at leading institutions across Africa and Europe, including the University of Ghana, the University of Ibadan, Makerere University, the University of Bern, Radboud University Medical Centre, the University of Glasgow, and Universitat Pompeu Fabra.



Working alongside multidisciplinary teams, the fellows gained hands-on experience in translational research, vaccine and diagnostic development, genomic surveillance, clinical trial pathways, regulatory science, and public health preparedness.



A hands-on laboratory experience (at the University of Bern) for Wakisa Kipandula, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences in Malawi.

Their projects addressed critical challenges related to Mpox and Lassa fever, including the development of vaccine candidates, early warning systems for outbreaks, rapid diagnostic tests, genomic surveillance tools, and locally producible diagnostic technologies.



A knowledge exchange session for the fellows at the University of Bern.

Beyond technical training, the fellowship fostered new networks and collaborations across institutions and countries.

“I feel that this training has given me the sufficient exposure and the skills needed to enter into this space and make a difference.” **Nicholas Bbosa, Uganda Virus Research Institute**

From Research to Real-World Impact

A defining feature of the fellowship was its focus on translational impact. Rather than producing academic outputs alone, fellows developed practical tools that can support decision-making by governments, regulators, health agencies, and industry partners. The outputs include:

- *Early-stage product development roadmaps outlining pathways from proof-of-concept to clinical application.*
- *Regulatory landscape analyses that describe approval pathways, ethical requirements and post-marketing surveillance expectations across key African jurisdictions.*

- *Draft policy briefs that synthesise evidence on Mpox and Lassa burden, control strategies and innovation gaps for ministries of health and regional bodies.*

These tools were co-developed with regulators, programme managers, and industry partners, enhancing their relevance and potential for adoption.

The fellowship is anchored within three Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoREs):

- *Translational Research in Infection, Immunity and Inflammation*
- *Advanced Infectious Diseases Research and Training*
- *Genomics for Health in Africa*

Through these networks, ARUA and The Guild are demonstrating how equitable Africa-Europe partnerships can simultaneously advance scientific excellence, capacity building, innovation, and policy impact.

As the inaugural cohort concludes its fellowship journey, the MAV+ initiative is already contributing to Africa’s broader ambitions for health sovereignty by strengthening local expertise in vaccine development, diagnostics, translational science, and epidemic preparedness. More importantly, it is building a new generation of African scientists equipped not only to generate knowledge but also to translate that knowledge into practical solutions that improve health outcomes across the continent.

The fellowship programme represents more than a research exchange initiative. It is a worthy investment in Africa’s future scientific leadership, epidemic preparedness, and health sovereignty.

“African researchers should intentionally build stronger networks among themselves, moving away from what is often perceived as a “one-man show” towards more collaborative and connected research ecosystems.”
Dr Irene Owusu Donkor, University of Ghana

ARUA AND UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA JOINT PHD PROGRAMME

ARUA has expanded its portfolio of research capacity development initiatives through a new partnership with the Università degli Studi di Padova (UNIPD), Italy, aimed at training the next generation of African researchers in Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence.

The partnership was formalised on June 8, 2026, during a landmark signing ceremony at the ARUA

Secretariat in Accra, Ghana. Professor John Gyapong, ARUA Secretary-General, and Professor Daniela Mapelli, Rector of the University of Padova, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a framework for joint PhD training and research collaboration, alongside the Africa Charter for Transformative Research Collaborations, reaffirming both institutions' commitment to equitable, co-created research partnerships between Africa and Europe.



Professor John Gyapong and Professor Daniela Mapelli sign an MoU between the two institutions.

The ceremony brought together academic and diplomatic leaders from Africa and Europe. The University of Padova delegation included Professor Massimiliano Zattin, Vice-Rector for International Relations, Doctoral Studies and Postgraduate Programmes, and Dr Camilla Girasole, Head of the International Office. Also in attendance were H.E. Laura Ranalli, Ambassador of Italy to Ghana, accompanied by Ms Manuel Cotto from the Italian Embassy, while the Association of African Universities (AAU) was represented by Professor Frederick Ato Armah, Director of Research and Programmes, and Mr Ransford Bekoe, Partnership Manager. The gathering underscored the growing importance of science diplomacy and equitable international partnerships in advancing research and higher education.



Witnesses at the auspicious occasion of the ARUA-UNIPD MoU signing ceremony.

At the heart of the partnership is a pilot split-site PhD scholarship programme that will provide outstanding African researchers in health sciences with opportunities to undertake joint training between their home universities and the University of Padova. The pilot programme will involve researchers from the University of Ghana, the University of Ibadan, Makerere University and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Selected fellows will spend a minimum of six months in Italy while receiving joint supervision from African and European academics, enabling them to access world-class research facilities, international mentorship, and global research networks.

The programme's main focus is on Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence as a unifying theme, supporting research on priority health challenges, including cardiovascular diseases, neuroscience, infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, epidemiology, healthcare systems, HIV/TB, malaria, and pulmonary health. In addition to tuition waivers, successful candidates will receive competitive scholarships covering living costs, mobility support and research expenses, while benefiting from opportunities for joint publications and long-term research collaboration. The University of Padova has committed to supporting at least eight PhD scholarships annually over the next five years, creating a sustainable pipeline of highly skilled African researchers.

Beyond doctoral training, the partnership provides a platform for deeper institutional collaboration, joint research proposals and faculty exchange, particularly under programmes such as Horizon Europe. By combining world-class doctoral education with the principles of the Africa Charter, the ARUA–Padova partnership advances ARUA's mission of strengthening African research excellence while preparing a new generation of scientists to harness digital technologies and artificial intelligence to address the continent's most pressing health challenges.

SECTION 3: ARUA IN THE MARKETPLACE

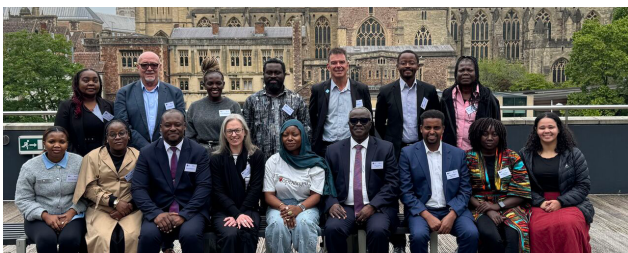
ARUA AT THE UNIVERSITAS 21 (U21) LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2026



ARUA Secretary General, Professor John Gyapong, represented the African Research Universities Alliance at the Universitas 21 Leadership Summit 2026, hosted by the University of Glasgow. The summit brought together higher education leaders to reflect on the changing role of universities in a rapidly evolving global landscape. Discussions focused on the state of global higher education, knowledge diplomacy, universities as global connectors, research translation and innovation, widening access to higher education, responsible use of artificial intelligence, civic trust, and leadership development for the future.

Professor Gyapong noted the value of the summit's rich programme, including an inspiring keynote by Nobel Laureate Sir David MacMillan on the transformative power of education, curiosity, and opportunity. He was also honoured to participate in the concluding plenary alongside Jenny Dixon, Provost of Universitas 21, and Jan Palmowski, Secretary-General of The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities. His participation reinforced ARUA's commitment to engaging in global higher education conversations and advancing African research universities as active contributors to innovation, collaboration, and inclusive development.

ARUA ATTENDS THE WORLD UNIVERSITIES NETWORK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026



The ARUA Early Career Researchers, mentors and ARUA team at the WUN Conference at the University of Bristol.

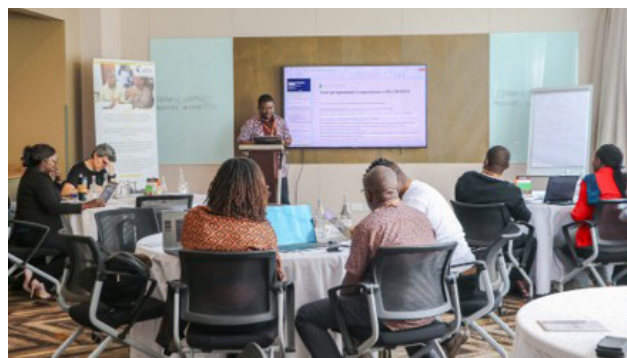
On 20 - 22 May, 2026, the ARUA Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) organised a workshop on systems thinking for selected ECR fellows on the sidelines of the World Universities Network (WUN) Annual General Meeting 2026 at Bristol University.

The ARUA Secretary General, Professor John Gyapong, supported the SFS team led by Professor Frans Swanepoel to facilitate the workshop. The ECRs had a great opportunity to sharpen their systems-thinking skills through their research approach to address the complex challenges in Africa's food systems.

The ECRs appreciated the opportunity not only to sharpen their research skills but also to showcase their innovative research ideas and network with other researchers.

"Thank you, Professor John, for your inspiring insights shared with the Early Career Fellows in Bristol. I particularly appreciated your emphasis on mentorship, collaboration, and the importance of young researchers bringing fresh perspectives to global challenges. Your encouragement to remain curious, resilient, and open to interdisciplinary learning is highly motivating for many of us navigating the early stages of our careers." – **Dr. Naomi Chelang'a**

ARUA REPRESENTED AT CARTA STAKEHOLDERS FORUM IN NAIROBI



Dr Emmanuel Abbey, ARUA Consultant, sharing on ARUA's experience with CB-SITS.

ARUA participated in a validation workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15–16 April 2026, as part of the Annual Partners' Meeting for the Capacity Building and Scientific Impact Tracking System for Africa. The meeting was hosted by the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa and supported by the Andrew Carnegie Foundation (previously, Carnegie Corporation of New York). It brought together partner institutions working

to develop a digital platform that can track, analyse, and communicate the impact of research capacity-building programmes across Africa. The workshop focused on reviewing the platform's evaluation framework, data visualisation tools, and dissemination features to ensure that they are practical, credible, and useful for programme planning, learning, and decision-making.

ARUA was represented by Dr. Emmanuel Danso and Dr. Emmanuel Abbey, who joined other participants from partner institutions in reviewing their institutional pages on the platform, checking what information was accurate, what needed correction, and what gaps remained. ARUA used the opportunity to verify information on its pilot Early Career Researchers programme and consider how the platform can better capture the programme's scope, history, outcomes, and reporting needs. Through this contribution, ARUA is helping strengthen the platform as a shared resource for universities, funders, policymakers, and partners seeking reliable evidence on the value and impact of African research and capacity-building initiatives.

ARUA JOINS HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT FORUM IN NAIROBI



Professor Jane Ambuko contributes to the panel discussion at the Higher Education Impact Forum.

ARUA participated in the IMPACT HE Leadership and Stakeholder Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6–7 May, 2026, which brought together university leaders, policymakers, higher education networks, and development partners to discuss the role of African universities in advancing local development. The forum provided a platform for dialogue on the societal impact of higher education cooperation, equitable global

partnerships, African research leadership, and the role of universities as development actors. ARUA was represented by Professor Jane Ambuko, Director of Research and Training. She joined a high-level panel of leaders from major African higher education associations to discuss, “African universities as development agents: The role of associations and networks.”

In her contribution, Professor Ambuko highlighted ARUA's role as a network of 23 leading African universities working collectively to strengthen research excellence and contribute to Africa's socio-economic transformation through research and innovation. She underscored the importance of moving African universities from participation in global research partnerships to agenda-setting, co-creation, and shared leadership. ARUA also showcased its Centres of Excellence, Africa-Europe research collaboration model, and Early-Career Researcher Programme as examples of how African-led networks can build capacity, strengthen visibility, and ensure that research responds to local priorities. The forum concluded with a clear message that equitable partnerships will depend on African universities having a stronger voice in shaping research priorities, development agendas, and knowledge production from the continent.

ARUA AT THE CORE CONFERENCE 2026

More than 300 researchers, university leaders, funders and policy actors from Africa and Europe gathered at the University of Glasgow from 14–17 June, 2026, for the Second Africa–Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoRE) Conference. The meeting marked three years since the launch of the CoRE initiative, a flagship partnership between ARUA and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities, which now has 22 Clusters of Research Excellence, more than 400 researchers, and over 120 institutions across 44 countries. The conference also brought together Vice-Chancellors and Presidents from 46 leading universities in Africa and Europe to reflect on how research partnerships can help address shared global challenges in health, digital transformation, environmental sustainability, technological change, and social development.



Participants of the CoRE Conference 2026 at the University of Glasgow.

Hosted during the University of Glasgow's 575th anniversary celebrations, the conference provided an opportunity to assess progress, reflect on emerging global challenges, and chart the future of equitable Africa–Europe research collaboration. Discussions focused on a rapidly changing geopolitical and funding landscape, including shifting donor priorities, growing emphasis on resilience and competitiveness, knowledge security concerns, and the increasing role of artificial intelligence in research and society.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the AU–EU Innovation Agenda, the African Union's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2034), and the European Union's Global Gateway Strategy through equitable and impactful research collaboration.

On the sidelines of the conference, the ARUA Board (comprising Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of ARUA member universities) held its annual meeting to review progress across ARUA programmes/initiatives and provide strategic direction for the future. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Provosts from member institutions. This was followed by a joint leadership session that brought together ARUA Vice-Chancellors and Guild Presidents to review the progress of the CoRE initiative and explore strategies for strengthening Africa–Europe research partnerships and advancing the role of research and innovation in addressing shared global challenges.



The ARUA Board Meeting on the sidelines of the CoREs Conference in Glasgow.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CONFERENCE

• From Network Building to Research Impact

Three years after its launch, the CoRE initiative has evolved from a network-building platform into a partnership delivering tangible research, capacity-building and policy outcomes. Presentations from the 22 clusters highlighted significant achievements in securing international research funding, strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration, supporting early-career researchers, and generating knowledge that addresses pressing societal challenges. Reflecting on this progress, ARUA Secretary-General Professor John Gyapong observed that the CoRE initiative has become “a credible institution”. He challenged participants to move beyond reflection and make bold decisions on the next phase of growth, sustainability and impact. He emphasised the need for stronger institutional commitment, administrative support, seed funding and greater visibility of CoRE achievements.

• Equity Remains Both an Achievement and a Challenge

A recurring theme throughout the conference was the importance of equitable partnerships. Participants emphasised that successful collaborations require deliberate investment in trust-building, shared leadership, mutual accountability, and locally relevant research agendas. At the same time, concerns were raised about unequal funding structures and the need for more sustainable and balanced models of international collaboration.

Echoing this sentiment, Guild Secretary-General Professor Jan Palmowski underscored the importance of creating “spaces of trust” within research partnerships where difficult conversations about inequalities in funding, infrastructure and human resources can be openly addressed. He noted that such spaces are even more important in a period of geopolitical uncertainty and shifting global research priorities.

Beyond research collaboration, participants emphasised that strengthening Africa's scientific capacity requires systemic investment in talent development, higher education, research infrastructure and innovation ecosystems. The conference called for new models of research and innovation collaboration that support locally grounded solutions to global challenges while maximising the societal impact of research investments.

- **Investing in the Next Generation of Researchers**

The CoREs' contribution to research capacity strengthening has grown significantly over the years. Across the clusters, hundreds of early-career researchers have benefited from fellowships, mobility programmes, doctoral training, masterclasses and collaborative research opportunities, helping to nurture the next generation of African and European scholars.

In his keynote address, Professor Peter Maassen of the University of Oslo emphasised that the CoRE initiative must contribute to training a new generation of scholars capable of addressing global challenges while avoiding brain drain and strengthening research capacity on both continents. He described the CoRE model as a move towards "equal partnerships in an unequal world" and stressed the importance of long-term institutional commitment to ensure its sustainability.

- **Learning Across the Research Clusters**

The joint CoRE sessions provided researchers from various clusters with an opportunity to showcase achievements, discuss ongoing challenges, and exchange experiences across thematic areas. These sessions fostered mutual learning, interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge sharing, while identifying opportunities for deeper engagement across clusters.



The ARUA and Guild leadership at the CoREs Conference in Glasgow.

- **Positioning Partnerships for a Changing Global Landscape**

High-level discussions involving ARUA Vice-Chancellors, Guild Presidents, representatives of the European Commission and funding partners explored how Africa–Europe collaborations can remain relevant and impactful amid geopolitical uncertainty.

Maria Cristina Russo, from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), reflected on the AU–EU Innovation Agenda and how evolving geopolitical realities and EU research policies are shaping opportunities for Africa–Europe collaboration. She encouraged the leadership of the Guild and ARUA Universities to explore strategic engagement with the EU and AU.

Professor Christopher Smith, Executive Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council and International Champion of UK Research and Innovation, highlighted the challenges of funding international collaboration amid political uncertainty. He emphasised the importance of sustaining equitable partnerships and ensuring stronger alignment between local and global research priorities despite shifting funding landscapes and resource constraints.

Considering that global science has historically been shaped by power imbalances and unequal access to resources, the need for trust-based partnerships that recognise the diversity of both Africa and Europe as a strength was emphasised. In addition, there was a call to foster more inclusive and mutually beneficial approaches to research and innovation.

The discussions reinforced the view that research partnerships must become more resilient, strategic, and responsive to emerging global challenges.

ARUA Board Chair Professor Sizwe Mabizela noted that the CoRE initiative had demonstrated the transformative potential of Africa–Europe collaboration by creating new partners, new and expanded opportunities, and above all, new possibilities.

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

The conference concluded with a strong sense that transformative science relationships are indispensable for addressing humanity's common challenges. Participants agreed that collaboration remains the most effective pathway for tackling global issues, reducing inequalities in scientific capacity, and creating solutions that are scalable, inclusive, and impactful.

Summarising the spirit of the conference, Guild Chair Professor Anders Hagfeldt reminded participants of the saying that “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.”

Looking ahead, there was consensus that the next phase of the CoRE initiative must focus on consolidating gains, securing long-term funding, deepening equitable partnerships, and positioning Africa–Europe collaboration to address the complex challenges of an increasingly interconnected world.

Closing the conference, Professor Mabizela reaffirmed both networks' commitment to sustaining momentum despite an increasingly challenging global environment. On his part, Professor Hagfeldt emphasised the importance of collective action in advancing research excellence and impact.



Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P) in Morocco will host the next CoRE Conference in 2028.

ARUA CHALLENGES CURRENT APPROACH TO RESEARCH AT E2A CONFERENCE



A panel discussion session on ‘What Must Change for an Africa-Led Evidence Ecosystem’.

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) contributed to high-level continental discussions on strengthening evidence-informed policymaking during the Evidence to Action (E2A) 2026 Conference, held from 24–26 June 2026 at the University of Ghana, Legon. The conference was organised by the *International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED)*, Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) and other partners.

Convened under the theme “*Reimagining the Evidence-Informed Policy and Decision-Making Ecosystem in Africa*”, the conference brought together policymakers, researchers, development partners, and practitioners to explore how Africa can build stronger, more inclusive and sustainable evidence systems.

Representing ARUA on a panel discussion “*What Must Change for an Africa-Led Evidence Ecosystem?*”, Director of Research and Training, Professor Jane Ambuko, challenged the prevailing project-driven approach to research on the continent, arguing that Africa must transition from short-term, donor-funded projects to institution-led research ecosystems capable of generating sustained evidence for policymaking.

Professor Ambuko highlighted ARUA's Centres of Excellence and the Africa-Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoREs) as practical models for building long-term research capacity, strengthening collaboration across institutions and disciplines, and creating enduring platforms for evidence generation that outlive individual projects.

“The real test of an Africa-led evidence ecosystem is not who conducts the research, but who decides what research gets done.”

She argued that an Africa-led evidence ecosystem requires governments to move beyond endorsing evidence-informed policymaking to investing in the institutions that generate the evidence. She welcomed the Memoranda of Understanding signed during the conference by government representatives from Kenya, Ghana and The Gambia as an encouraging step towards stronger government–research partnerships. She, however, called for increased investment in research and evidence generation aligned with national priorities and the broader continental development priorities envisioned under the African Union Agenda 2063.

Professor Ambuko also challenged funders, including African governments, to deliberately invest in Early

Career Researchers (ECRs) who embody the next generation of African researchers. She noted that some of Africa's extremely innovative research ideas from ECRs never progress beyond the drawing board because funding most often goes to established researchers and institutions. She called for dedicated, ring-fenced funding that enables young researchers to test bold, unproven ideas capable of addressing the continent's emerging development challenges.

In her closing remarks, Professor Ambuko emphasised that Africa's evidence ecosystem can only be truly

Africa-led if its researchers and institutions have the authority to set the research agenda by defining the research questions and the approaches required to answer them. She observed that while donor funding has played a vital role in advancing research across the continent, reliance on external financing often means that research priorities are shaped elsewhere. She called on African governments and regional institutions to invest more strategically in research so that Africa can generate evidence driven by its own priorities and aspirations rather than external interests.

"If governments want evidence-informed policymaking, they must invest in the institutions that generate the evidence, because those who finance research inevitably influence the agenda"

SECTION 4: SPOTLIGHT ON ARUA CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

ARUA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN URBANISATION & HABITABLE CITIES (ARUA-UHC)

Centre for Housing and Sustainable Development (CHSD) | University of Lagos, Nigeria

Africa is experiencing one of the fastest rates of urbanisation in the world. By 2050, the continent is projected to add more than 800 million urban residents, creating unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges related to housing, infrastructure, mobility, governance, climate resilience, and livelihoods. In the heart of Lagos—one of Africa’s most dynamic and rapidly growing megacities—the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Urbanisation and Habitable Cities (ARUA-UHC), hosted by the Centre for Housing and Sustainable Development (CHSD) at the University of Lagos, has emerged as one of the continent’s leading hubs for urban research, capacity strengthening, and policy engagement. More than an academic institution, ARUA-UHC represents a sustained commitment to ensuring that Africa’s urban transformation results in cities that are liveable, equitable, resilient, and sustainable.

Established in 2013, CHSD was founded in recognition of the urgent need for new knowledge, new partnerships, and new leadership to address Africa’s rapidly evolving urban landscape. Since its designation as an ARUA Centre of Excellence, the centre has expanded its continental and global reach through collaborative research, capacity-building initiatives, and policy engagement, helping to shape evidence-based solutions to some of Africa’s most pressing urban challenges.

“With over 173 slums in Lagos, a growing housing crisis, and rapid urbanisation, Africa’s cities cannot afford piecemeal solutions. We need transformative, evidence-based strategies and that is what CHSD exists to provide.” — **Professor Timothy G. Nubi, Centre Director, ARUA-UHC**

Leadership and Governance



Professor Timothy G. Nubi
Centre Director



Professor Peter Elias
Co-Director, Research Administration



Professor Taibat Lawanson
Co-Director, International Partnerships



Dr. Esther Thontteh
Centre Manager

The centre is led by a multidisciplinary team of scholars and practitioners committed to advancing evidence-based solutions to Africa’s urban challenges. Under the leadership of Professor Timothy G. Nubi, a renowned expert in housing finance, urban regeneration, and urban governance, the centre has evolved from a national research initiative into a pan-African platform for research, capacity strengthening, policy engagement, and international collaboration.

Supporting this vision are Professor Peter Elias, Co-Director for Research Administration, and Professor Taibat Lawanson, Co-Director for International Partnerships, whose combined expertise has strengthened the centre’s research excellence, global visibility, and strategic partnerships. The operational management of the centre is coordinated by Dr. Esther Thontteh, whose leadership has helped sustain a vibrant network of researchers, students, policymakers, and development partners across Africa and beyond.

Together, the leadership team has positioned ARUA-UHC as a leading voice in shaping urban futures across the continent through collaborative research, policy-relevant knowledge generation, and the training of the next generation of African urban scholars.

The ARUA-UHC at a Glance

9 Spoke Universities across Africa	13+ International University Partners	10 Multidisciplinary Research Clusters
13+ ECR Post-Doctoral Fellows Hosted	100+ Member Housing Cooperatives to address Housing Deficit	£1.9M MUCA Research Investment (UKRI-GCRF)

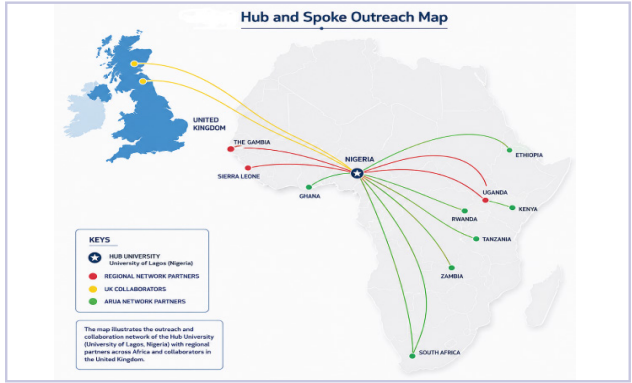
Vision, Mission and Goals

ARUA-UHC VISION

“To become a hub for world-class interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary applied research on urbanisation and habitable cities in Africa, connecting researchers for the purpose of initiating, developing, disseminating and affecting change in Africa’s cities.”

The diagram illustrates four interconnected components of the research approach, each represented by a colored rounded rectangle with a corresponding arrow pointing to a descriptive text box on the right. The components are arranged vertically and connected by horizontal dotted lines.

- Research** (Orange box): Conduct cutting-edge, internationally regarded urban research across ten multidisciplinary clusters.
- Stakeholder Engagement** (Blue box): Engage government, industry, communities, and policymakers to translate knowledge into evidence-led practice.
- Visibility & Networking** (Red box): Engage government, industry, communities, and policymakers to translate knowledge into evidence-led practice.
- Capacity Building** (Green box): Build research capacities of urban scientists and nurture the next generation of African researchers.



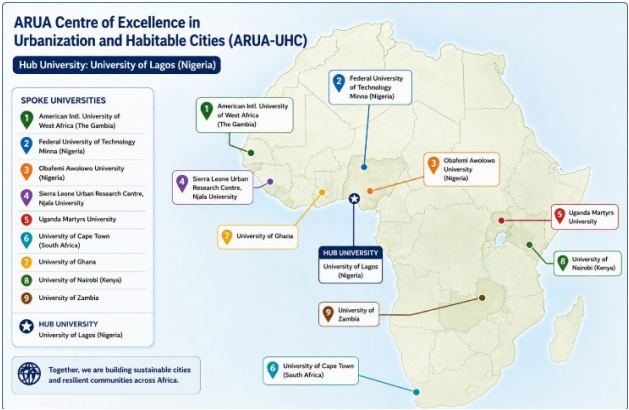
A Pan-African Network Built for Impact

Today, ARUA-UHC's hub-and-spoke model connects the University of Lagos with nine spoke institutions spanning West, East, Southern, and Central Africa as depicted below.

Institutional partners and funders include ARUA, UKRI-GCRF, the Mastercard Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, FCDO, DAAD, the African Development Bank, and the Real Estate Developers' Association of Nigeria (REDAN), among many others, reflecting the depth of confidence that major global and African institutions have placed in CHSD's work.

Ten Clusters, One Mission

The 10 centres, their research focus areas, the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063 goals they align with are depicted below.



A	African Urbanization Dynamics — Examining the forces driving rapid urbanisation: demographic change, rural-urban migration, land-use pressure, and governance gaps. This cluster develops frameworks for sustainable city growth, aligned with SDG 11 and Africa's New Urban Agenda.	Aligned with 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES Africa's New Urban Agenda
B	Housing and Urban Regeneration — Nigeria's housing deficit stands at an estimated 28 million units. This cluster addresses housing policy, informal settlement upgrading, and innovative finance and delivery models to make affordable housing a reality, linking to SDG 11 and Agenda 2063 Goal 1.	Aligned with 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 1 POVERTY Agenda 2063 Goal 1
C	Urban Health and Liveability — Investigating the relationship between urban form and community health outcomes — from air quality and sanitation to green space and mental well-being. Aligned with SDG 3, with cross-CoE linkages to ARUA's Centre on Non-Communicable Diseases.	Aligned with 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING Cross-CoE Linkage: ARUA Centre on Non-Communicable Diseases
D	Sustainable Infrastructure and Urban Design — Advancing climate-adaptive urban design and resilient infrastructure for African cities facing the dual pressures of rapid growth and climate change. Aligned with SDGs 9, 11, and 13.	Aligned with 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 13 CLIMATE ACTION
E	Land Administration and Management — Africa's land governance systems are among the most contested on the planet. This cluster advances research on land reform, equitable tenure, and spatial planning, aligned with SDG 16.	Aligned with 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
F	Pro-poor Urban Development and Governance — With over 145 informal settlements in Lagos alone, pro-poor governance is existential. This cluster focuses on inclusive governance, poverty reduction, and community-led development, aligned with SDGs 1, 10, and 11.	Aligned with 1 POVERTY 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
G	Digital Built Environment — Leveraging digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence to enhance urban research, design, and management. Explores smart building systems, AI-driven spatial analysis, and digital urban platforms, aligned with SDG 9.	Aligned with 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
H	Sustainable Construction and Skills Development — Advancing sustainable building practices and closing the construction skills gap that impedes housing delivery across Africa, aligned with SDG 8.	Aligned with 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
I	Spatial Data and Infrastructure — Developing geospatial data systems to underpin evidence-based planning and urban management decisions across African cities.	
J	Urban Mobility and Resilience — Examining transit-oriented development and climate-resilient mobility solutions for rapidly growing African cities. Aligned with SDGs 9, 11, and 13.	Aligned with 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 13 CLIMATE ACTION

Migration, Urbanisation and Conflict in Africa (MUCA)

Funded by UKRI-GCRF | £1.9 million

The MUCA project brought together CHSD with Addis Ababa University, Makerere University, and the University of Sheffield to investigate the relationships between migration, urbanisation, and conflict across nine cities in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Uganda. Beyond generating critical empirical knowledge, the project invested explicitly in research capacity-building skills at younger African universities, including the University of Jos, Gulu University, and Hawassa University, and in charting pathways towards peaceful urban futures.



MUCA Project team members in a discussion session.



MUCA Project team members.

Flagship Projects Driving Change

Across its research clusters, ARUA-UHC has built an impressive portfolio of funded projects and collaborative initiatives. Three flagship programmes illustrate the centre's capacity to lead large-scale, high-impact research across national and disciplinary boundaries.

ACRC Lagos City Lead Project

African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC) | Funded by FCDO | 2024–2027 (ongoing)

As the designated Lagos City Lead under the African Cities Research Consortium, CHSD is driving large-scale, evidence-based urban reforms across six interconnected domains: housing, climate resilience, neighbourhood development, economic development, safety, and security. This active, ongoing engagement positions Lagos as a living laboratory for African urban transformation and places CHSD at the centre of city-level reform conversations at the highest levels of government and policy.



ACRC-Community engagement.

WITS-TUB-UNILAG Urban Lab

Funded by DAAD | SDG Graduate School Programme (ongoing)

A joint initiative with TU Berlin and the University of the Witwatersrand, the Urban Lab offers a Master's degree in Urban Management aligned with Agenda 2063, the New Urban Agenda, and the SDGs. It provides competitive scholarships to deserving candidates from across Africa, combining rigorous academic training with practical problem-solving in real urban contexts. The programme is a direct embodiment of the centre's commitment to growing the next generation of African urban professionals.



Urban Lab students in communities.



Closeout workshop participants at the UHC-hosted conference.

“Flagship collaborations such as MUCA, the ACRC Lagos City Lead Project, and the WITS-TUB-UNILAG Urban Lab position ARUA-UHC at the centre of global urban development discourse.”



The WUF13 Urban Library session at the UHC.

The WUF13 Urban Library session on “*Multilateral Consortium and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in Knowledge Co-Production for Climate-Resilient Cities*”, convened by the centre and attended by representatives from international research consortia, academia, government and public health, highlighted the urgent need for collaborative approaches to address Africa's urban challenges. Discussions emphasised that climate resilience requires more than technical solutions; it demands partnerships between academia, government, communities, and development actors. Participants stressed the importance of making informal communities visible through

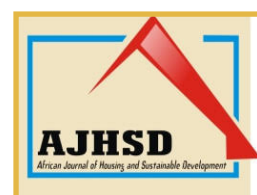
participatory data systems, strengthening reform coalitions, and ensuring evidence informs practical policy decisions. The session concluded that inclusive, people-centred, and evidence-driven collaboration remains essential for building resilient, sustainable, and equitable African cities.

Knowledge that Travels

At ARUA-UHC, research is not an end in itself. The centre is committed to ensuring that evidence generated through research informs policy, strengthens practice, and contributes to sustainable urban development across Africa.

Through its multidisciplinary research programmes, ARUA-UHC generates knowledge products that address some of the continent's most pressing urban challenges, including housing, land governance, urban resilience, mobility, informality, and sustainable infrastructure. These outputs are disseminated through peer-reviewed publications, policy briefs, technical reports, books, conferences, policy dialogues, and public engagement platforms that connect researchers with decision-makers and practitioners.

A key vehicle for knowledge dissemination is the *African Journal of Housing and Sustainable Development (AJHSD)*, a peer-reviewed journal that promotes innovative and policy-relevant scholarship on African cities.



The centre's growing portfolio of publications and policy products continues to inform debates on urban development across academia, government, civil society, and the private sector.

Beyond publications, ARUA-UHC convenes annual conferences, expert dialogues, public lectures, and stakeholder forums that create spaces for researchers, policymakers, urban practitioners, and communities to co-produce solutions to Africa's urban challenges.



Participants at one of the conferences hosted by ARUA-UHC.

The centre's annual *Land and Development Conference* has become an important platform for advancing evidence-based discussions on urban transformation and sustainable development.

By ensuring that knowledge reaches those who can act on it, ARUA-UHC continues to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice, helping to shape more inclusive, resilient, and habitable cities across Africa.

ARUA – UHC Capacity and Skills Development Initiatives

Training and other capacity strengthening activities

Perhaps no measure of ARUA-UHC's impact is more enduring than the researchers it has trained and mentored. The centre hosts MPhil and PhD programmes in Sustainable Urbanisation at the University of Lagos, and coordinates the WITS-TUB-UNILAG Urban Lab Master's in Urban Management, creating structured pathways for emerging urban scholars to develop expertise and build international networks.

Monthly mentorship activities, annual PhD colloquia embedded within the Network Conference, and researcher exchange programmes across ARUA spoke universities strengthen a growing pipeline of African urban scientists. Recent capacity-building programmes illustrate the breadth of this investment.

Recent Capacity-Building Workshops and Programmes

- ✓ Transdisciplinary Research Workshop for postgraduate researchers
- ✓ Safeguarding Workshops
- ✓ Workshop on Strengthening Multidisciplinary Research in African Universities
- ✓ Research Centre Impact Measurement and Assessment Workshop
- ✓ Policy-Engaged Research Workshops for PhD Students in Africa (multi-day, multi-site)
- ✓ ARUA Mentorship and Capacity Strengthening Workshop for Early Career Researchers
- ✓ Masterclasses and public lectures across research cluster themes
- ✓ Network Visiting Researcher Mobility Grants for scholars across ARUA spoke universities

ARUA Early Career Researchers Programme

One of the most direct expressions of ARUA-UHC's commitment to growing African scholarship is its hosting of the ARUA Early Career Researchers (ECR) Programme. Since the programme's inception, the centre has welcomed thirteen post-doctoral visiting researchers from institutions across Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States, bringing genuinely diverse regional and disciplinary perspectives on Africa's urban challenges.

Current ECR Fellows hosted by the ARUA-UHC



Dr. Célestine Laure Djiraro Mangué

April 1 – September 30, 2026
University of Maroua, Cameroon



Dr. Precious Joan Wapukha

January 1 – June 30, 2026
Kibabii University, Kenya



Dr. Williams Miller Appau

Fellow in Focus: Dr. Williams Miller Appau

Lecturer, University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS), Ghana | ECR Fellow, October 2025 – March 2026

Dr. Appau's fellowship at ARUA-UHC exemplifies the programme at its best. A specialist in sustainable urban development, energy efficiency, smart buildings, and real estate management, he arrived with a clear research focus and left with a significantly expanded professional footprint.

Under the mentorship of Prof. Timothy Nubi, Dr. Appau developed an integrated energy optimisation framework for AI-driven HVAC systems and behavioural feedback mechanisms in Ghanaian shopping malls — a study with direct implications for energy policy and building management across West Africa.

Dr. Appau's Fellowship Achievements

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Published five research papers, exceeding ARUA publication requirements | dissemination contributions |
| ✓ Two additional papers in production; three manuscripts under review | ✓ Mentored postgraduate students at CHSD |
| ✓ Coordinated a special journal issue attracting 26 manuscript submissions | ✓ Refined a career roadmap focused on sustainable housing, smart buildings, and urban resilience in Africa |
| ✓ Delivered conference presentations and stakeholder | ✓ Enhanced grant-writing skills and built new international interdisciplinary collaborations |

"My six months at ARUA-UHC strengthened both my professional skills and academic networks. Serving as a key editor of a special issue and the ECR regional workshop improved my understanding of journal management and editorial processes, while networking with colleagues across Africa expanded my methodological and collaborative capabilities." — **Dr. Williams Miller Appau, ECR Fellow (UBIDS, Ghana)**

Connect with ARUA-UHC

About ARUA-UHC / CHSD

Established in December 2013, the Centre for Housing and Sustainable Development (CHSD) at the University of Lagos is the hub institution of the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Urbanisation and Habitable Cities. It conducts research, builds capacity, and engages policy across Africa's most pressing urban challenges.

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THE ARUA NOTICEBOARD

OPPORTUNITIES

- ARUA Early Career Researchers Fellowship Call (<https://arua.org/early-career-research-fellowships/>). The application window is still open until 15th July for the second batch of cohort 5
- ARUA Middle Career Researchers Fellowship Call

Coming soon – continue checking the ARUA Website



ARUA
African Research Universities Alliance

ARUA EARLY CAREER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2026

Deadline for Application:
22nd January 2026
 Option 1: Fellowship period from March to August 2026
15th July 2026
 Option 2: Fellowship period from September 2026 to February 2027

Application Link:
<https://arua.org/early-career-research-fellowships/>

For more information visit the ARUA Website: www.arua.org
 For Inquiries Email: ecr.info@arua.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Inaugural ARUA Centre of Excellence Led Quarterly Webinar** co-hosted by ARUA CoE for Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) and African Centre for Inequalities Research (ACEIR) on 14th July 2026, Online - Register at <https://bit.ly/4uO8f30>




ARUA African Research Universities Alliance

ARUA-SFS Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Food Systems

ACEIR African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research

CONNECTING INEQUALITY RESEARCH WITH FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA

ARUA Centers of Excellence Quarterly Webinar Series

14th July 2026 **12.00 GMT**

REGISTER NOW: <https://bit.ly/4uO8f30>

SPEAKERS

Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) **African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research (ACEIR)**

Professor Frans Swanevel
Director – SFS

Professor Vimal RANCHOD
Co-Director – ACEIR

Dr. Franklyn Chiriboga
Dr. Francesca Anthonio-Akpan
Dr. Ghislaine Ntombiyaniwe Shumba
Dr. Amos Mungu
Dr. Susan Wanjau Kimani
Dr. Azeel Akram Pethan

- **ARUA's Annual Public Lecture** titled 'Innovations and capacity building in bio-manufacturing to address health system gaps in Africa' by Professor Leon Mutesa, University of Rwanda, 16th October 2026, at the University of Rwanda



Professor Leon Mutesa

- **Regional Workshop** for ARUA Early Career Researchers – end of October 2026



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