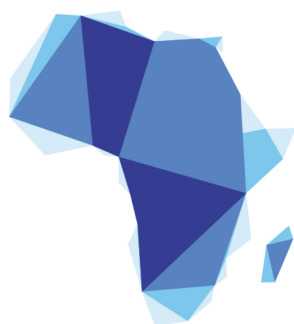


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MAWAZO INSTITUTE

WOMEN LEADING RESEARCH IN AFRICA

It's hard to believe that 2019 is almost over, but what a dynamic year it has been at Mawazo.

Earlier this year, we graduated our first cohort of PhD Scholars and November now finds us [in search of our 2020 class](#). This time, with an expanded programme open to African women pursuing PhDs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Sciences not only in Kenya, but also in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania (**Deadline: Nov 22nd, 2019**).

In 2019, we also recruited a Board of Directors, which held its first annual meeting in October. A board is reflective of an organisation's long term ambition, so when we set out to recruit the inaugural Mawazo board, we did not take this task lightly. [Our resulting ten-member board](#), spans geographies and expertise and is made up of individuals who have already achieved much success in their areas of practice. Under their oversight and guidance, we believe that Mawazo will continue to grow from strength to strength.

These are just a few highlights from our year at Mawazo, and we invite you to read on as we spotlight some of our other favorite moments.

The Mawazo Team

[Apply for the PhD Scholars Programme](#)

[Meet the Board](#)

Nduba-Banja, Kyle Polite, and Kim-Andrée Potvin.

Comprised of seasoned public and private sector experts, board members will each serve a renewable two-year term. Collectively, they will be responsible for overseeing our institutional growth, ensuring we meet our mission, and providing guidance to the CEO. For a behind-the-scenes introduction to our Board, [read our interview with Board Chair and Co-Founder, Rachel Strohm.](#)

2018 Annual Report

Covering our first full programme year, the 2018 Annual Report represents our successes so far, and outlines the impact of our investment in the next generation of African women leaders. "More than half of our inaugural PhD Scholars are on track to earn their doctoral degrees by 2020. The other half, in the next three years. In a country where only 11% of every doctoral class graduates, we cannot underscore the importance of this," says CEO, Dr. Rose M. Mutiso.



[Download the 2018 Annual Report](#)



From the TED stage, our CEO discusses energy poverty in Africa and makes a case for a new energy system for the continent.

The New 'Nairobi Ideas'

An informed public is an important, yet often overlooked pillar for transformative change. In an era of mounting anti-science, it is also crucial that researchers take on thought leadership and advocacy roles. This is why, as Mawazo, we continue to promote public engagement with research and evidence. In 2019, we focused on growing the *Nairobi Ideas* brand, Mawazo's signature public engagement programme, by creating inventive, informal, and informative programming.

This included a relaunch of the [Nairobi Ideas Podcast](#) under the new theme of Climate and Conversation. In Season 2 of the podcast, we have explored Kenya's response to plastic pollution through punitive bans from two opposing sides, as we interviewed activist [James Wakibia](#) and plastic waste management expert, [Dr. Leah Oyake-Ombis](#). We also invited leading Kenyan conservationists, [Dr. David Kimiti](#) (Lewa Conservancy) and [Dr. Paula Kahumbu](#) (WildlifeDirect), to weigh in on the pivotal need for ecosystem thinking, and the perceived conflict between human development and conservation. In September, Mawazo launched the [Nairobi Ideas Digest](#), followed closely by the [Nairobi Ideas Explainer](#). Both of which offer readers a deep dive into our thematic focus.

As we closed off October, we hosted the first [Nairobi Ideas Exchange](#); the newest platform under our public engagement programme that brings together small groups to share perspectives on a range of issues. The event, organised in partnership with MNM Consulting, brought entrepreneurs, creatives and change-makers from diverse disciplines to connect and examine opportunities for resolving the challenge of scaling Kenya's creative economy. The discussion

2019 Africa Science Week - Kenya



In our second year as co-sponsors of the Next Einstein Forum's Africa Science Week-Kenya (ASW-Kenya), the Mawazo Institute organised a week of science activities around the theme of Girls and Women in Science. This included our second Women in Science Leadership Breakfast, featuring senior women professionals in panel discussion, and introducing our 30 and Under: Breaking Barriers in STEM campaign, that celebrates six Kenyan women breaking barriers as young, female, scientists.

Keeping up with our theme, ASW-Kenya hosted a Girls in STEM Career Day that gave over 60 high school girls from around Nairobi a chance to meet a diversity of Kenyan women working in science careers. We also partnered with African Maths Initiative to create interactive maths sessions, designed to "let students enjoy the beauty of #Mathematics of the real world through hands-on and experiential learning."

Rounding out the week, we hosted the fourth Nairobi Ideas Night, under the theme 'Working on It', inviting a mix of six scientists to share lightning talks on the problems their ongoing work address. Our speakers for the night included Mawazo board member and tech enthusiast, Prof. Bitange Ndemo, 2018 Mawazo PhD Scholars, Marilyn Ronoh and Melisa Allela, along with other professionals working in the fields of development, technology, conservation, and digital media.



Melisa Allela was selected for the 2019 Electric South Media Lab, "a unique retreat which brings together diverse African artists and leading industry advisors to explore new frontiers of storytelling." She also had four papers (including three she co-authored) accepted at the Pan Commonwealth Forum organised by Open University and Commonwealth of Learning in Edinburgh. To keep up to date on Melisa's work you can visit her newly launched website at www.melisallela.com and learn more about her research [here](#).



Peris Ambala took part in the 4th African International Biotechnology and Biomedical conference, where she learned a new technique in proximity ligation assay. She was also received recognition for the best poster presented during the conference.

Elizabeth Benson makes her presentation on "Urban Highway Traffic Routing And

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Past Issues

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mission is to strengthen African Machine Learning.



Judith Koskey collects samples for her ongoing research on the impact of catchment disturbance on vegetation diversity, water quality, and macroinvertebrate abundance and diversity in Njoro and Kamweti rivers.



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