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# MAWAZO INSTITUTE

WOMEN LEADING RESEARCH IN AFRICA

Before the COVID-19 pandemic turned virtual learning into a near-necessity, Mawazo was working behind the scenes to develop an e-learning platform for African researchers. We wanted to build a platform with empathy and flexibility that could address some of the challenges facing young, African women at the start of their research careers, eager for professional development training while facing severe constraints on their time as academics, employees, spouses, caregivers, and more. We are proud to share the results of our work with you: [The Mawazo Learning Exchange \(MLEx\)](#).

The Mawazo Learning Exchange is a new online learning community for African women in academia and research, that offers training in core professional and research skills. MLEx provides a unique liberal arts style approach to professional development through short, intensive, online courses. The platform is also designed to share resources and opportunities tailored to the African context, and is freely available to scholars everywhere as Mawazo seeks to support a broader audience of African researchers and practitioners.

[In an interview, Dr. Angeline R. Wairegi](#), the e-learning specialist behind the development of MLEx, she shares her hopes for the programme. "We want to make an impact for women researchers on the continent," Dr. Wairegi says.

We invite you to embark on this journey with us by visiting: [www.mawazolearningexchange.org](http://www.mawazolearningexchange.org). The Mawazo Learning Exchange is supported by funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Fondation L'Oréal, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and individual donors.

Sincerely,  
The Mawazo Team

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## Fellowship

As we roll out the Mawazo Learning Exchange curriculum in 2021, we will invite up to 40 Fellows from universities across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda for the programme's pilot year. Selection of the Fellows is already underway, with finalists due to be announced in January 2021. Our 40 MLEx Fellows, as with [our PhD Scholars](#), will represent a group of innovative, young African women, aged under 40, who are engaged in compelling and interesting research at the PhD level (Application window closed). View our press release below for more details on the MLEx curriculum and our Fellows.

[View the MLEx Press Release](#)

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## We're Hiring for a Director of Programmes

We are hiring for our first-ever Director of Programmes. The Director of Programmes will join Mawazo's Senior Management team to oversee our diverse programme portfolio focused on supporting the [research](#) and [professional development](#) of African researchers and practitioners, and encouraging [policy](#) and [public engagement](#) with local research. **Applications close this Friday, October 30th.** Learn more about applying on our [Jobs page](#).

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## Mawazo Alumni and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mawazo is committed to continuing to find new ways to support our alumni during this moment of crisis. Quarterly alumni check-ins with our 2018 PhD Scholars allow us to understand what their needs are so we can better respond to them, while offering insight into how the larger regional research eco-system is faring. During our last check-in, in July

Another 7 out of 10 shared that despite the disruptions to classroom learning, their universities were not currently offering e-learning options. However, a majority of the PhD Scholars (6 out of 10) were still able to continue carrying out field and/or lab research activities, despite the COVID-19 restrictions in place.

When asked what kind of support Scholars needed the most right now, these were their most common responses:

1. Access to academic opportunities (conferences, workshops, webinars, etc.)
2. Professional development and/or training
3. Regular income source

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## Ideas on the Move: Scholar Highlights



**Melisa Allela** (*above*), a **storyteller and interactive media design maven**, took part in the 6th NODE Forum for Digital Arts in Frankfurt, Germany. Joining remotely, Melisa discussed her practice in a workshop titled, [\*World\(re\)building: How Ecotopias and Counter-Narratives Can Model Better Futures\*](#). The NODE Forum for Digital Arts brings together artists, designers, researchers, and technologists to critically reflect on emergent creative practices.



**Elizabeth Benson Mutua** (left), a computer scientist, presented a paper at [Kabarak University's 2020 Artificial Intelligence in Health Workshop](#); an online event organized by the School of Science, Engineering , and Technology, that brought together researchers, graduate students and practitioners in artificial intelligence and health. Elizabeth's paper provides a "*Comparative Analysis of Machine Learning Classification Techniques for Neonatal Postprandial Hypoglycemia Symptoms Screening.*"

**Jacqueline Owigo, who studies forced migration** [and recently published a policy brief on her research into the experiences of Somali returnees](#), received the 2020 Roy Bhaskar Memorial Fund for her commitment to using the philosophy of Critical Realism in her research. Jacqueline also received a fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). [SSRC](#)

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peace, security, and development topics in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.



**Peris Ambala, a molecular virologist studying zoonotic viruses** on the Kenyan front, was invited to present at the International Conference on (Re-) Emerging Infectious Diseases (ICREID2020). Scheduled for October 2020, the event has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more about Peris' research in Mawazo's DNA Day 2020 blog, [Understanding Zoonotic Diseases in the Era of COVID 19](#), where Peris

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viruses.





Billions of people lack enough energy to build a better life — and those billions of people are falling further and further behind the rest of the world, says Mawazo CEO, Dr. Rose Mutiso. The Mawazo Co-Founder was one of the speakers featured in the third session of the TED Countdown; a global initiative to accelerate solutions to the climate crisis. [Watch Rose's video here](#) and [read more](#) about the other speakers.

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**We share some of Mawazo's current favorite reads (videos, and podcasts)**

**below, including selections from our [News page](#):**

- "[Why Hasn't Africa Gone Digital?](#)" (Scientific American):

"One major reason is a lack of reliable, affordable electricity," argue Katie Hill, Global Director of Business Operations at Liquid Telecom and Mawazo CEO, Rose, as they explore the interrelation between access to reliable, affordable electricity, and the growth of the digital ecosystem in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- "[How to Talk about COVID-19 in Africa](#)" (Boston Review)

"To ask why COVID-19 hasn't been deadlier in Africa is to suggest that more Africans should be dying. We need better questions," says Nanjala Nyabola, a writer and political analyst based in Nairobi, Kenya, as she makes the case for better research on the impact of COVID-19 on the continent.

Three epidemiologists share their findings on the available research on cloth masks and face coverings, as well as some frequently asked questions.

- Recommended by Mawazo Board Chair and Co-Founder, Rachel Strohm, "[The Decolonizing the Academy Reading List](#)" (**Democracy in Africa**):

"In response to requests from colleagues and friends, some of whom said that they wanted to diversify their course material but were not always sure how to do so, we have assembled this set of readings on African Politics – the Decolonizing the Academy Reading List."

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