

# CENTRAL AFRICA FACTSHEET

The Mawazo Institute is a women-led African organisation supporting early-career women researchers across the African continent as they work to find solutions to local and global development challenges.

## BACKGROUND

The *Status of African Women in Research Report (2025)* offers an in-depth look at the experiences of African women pursuing doctoral studies. It highlights the systemic barriers they face – including limited funding, mentorship, mobility, and institutional support – and calls for actionable steps to transform the future of African research.

The *report* is based on data from two main sources. In 2022, an open call for the Mawazo Fellowship, a non-residential programme for African women PhD students, resulted in **927 submitted applications**. An 'Academic Needs' survey was conducted to better understand the needs of women researchers in Africa and was embedded within the Mawazo Fellowship application process, with **1445 applicants completing the survey by the end of the open call**.

By centring real stories and data, the report humanises the experiences of African women researchers and serves as a crucial resource for shaping more inclusive research environments.

## CENTRAL AFRICA KEY INSIGHTS

### FELLOWSHIP INTEREST

58 applications originated from Central Africa – accounting for only

**6%**

of all submissions received by Mawazo.

Cameroon submitted the highest number in the region, with 6% of the total applications.

### THEMATIC AREA OF RESEARCH

**Life and Health Sciences** emerged as the leading focus, accounting for

**42%**



This was followed by **Climate Change, the Environment and Natural Sciences**

**25%**



and **Agriculture and Food Security**, reflecting strong interest in addressing urgent global and regional challenges.

**21%**



A striking imbalance is observed, **4% of applicants focused on Gender, Rights and Governance and no other non-STEM applications were received**. This indicates a strong bias towards STEM fields in the region.



### FUNDING CHALLENGES

**67%**

of applicants reported receiving no financial support for their PhD studies.



**Over half 69%**

of applicants were self-funding their PhDs.



**Only 4%**

of Central African applicants secured university-based grants – the **lowest rate across the continent**, highlighting deep gaps in institutional support.



### RESEARCH MOBILITY

Less than

**1%**

of Central African applicants undertook their PhD in another country.



### BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

An overwhelming

**94%**



of Central African applicants reported difficulty collaborating with other researchers.



Curious about the rest of the continent? Access the full report here

THE STATUS OF  
AFRICAN  
WOMEN  
IN  
RESEARCH  
REPORT

Presented by Mawazo Institute



MAWAZO  
INSTITUTE  
WOMEN LEADING RESEARCH IN AFRICA

FUNDED BY



RISA



imaginable

