

EASTERN 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.

EASTERN AFRICA KEY INSIGHTS

FELLOWSHIP INTEREST

391 applications originated from Eastern Africa – accounting for

42%

of all submissions received by Mawazo.

Kenya accounted for the largest share of the applications, contributing 26% of total applications both within the Eastern Africa region and across the entire continent.

THEMATIC AREA OF RESEARCH

Agriculture and Food Security emerged as the leading focus, accounting for

23%



This was closely followed by **Life and Health Sciences**

20%



and **Climate Change, Environment, and Natural Sciences**, reflecting strong interest in addressing urgent global and regional challenges.

16%



FUNDING CHALLENGES



68%

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



Over half

58%

had to self-fund their research journeys.



Only

15%

of East African applicants secured university-based grants – highlighting deep gaps in institutional support.



RESEARCH MOBILITY



Kenya

24%

had the highest number of applicants undertaking their PhDs in their home country and the highest number of applicants of East African nationalities undertaking their PhD research in the country. This highlights Kenya's attractiveness as a **hub for research in the region**.

BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

An overwhelming

95%



of East African applicants reported difficulty collaborating with other researchers – the highest rate across the continent.



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

THE STATUS OF
AFRICAN
WOMEN IN
RESEARCH
REPORT

Presented by Mawazo Institute

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WOMEN LEADING RESEARCH IN AFRICA

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