

# 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

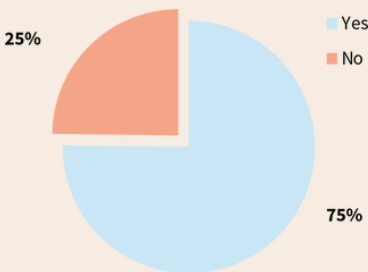
The *Status of African Women in Research Report (2025)* offers an in-depth look at the experiences of African women pursuing doctoral studies. It highlights the systemic barriers they face – including limited funding, mentorship, mobility, and institutional support – and calls for actionable steps to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

## CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES INSIGHTS

### CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES



**75%** of Mawazo Fellowship applicants identified as primary caregivers.

**87%** of caregivers reported a significant impact on their ability to find time for research due to caregiving responsibilities.

**98%** of caregivers reported an impact on their research work due to a lack of research funding.

### What does this mean for women in research?

African women researchers with caregiving responsibilities face a unique set of challenges that can significantly limit their professional growth:



**Financial Strain:** Balancing care duties with research often comes at a high personal cost, with limited financial resources available.



**Mobility Constraints:** Family responsibilities coupled with cultural expectations of motherhood restrict travel, reducing access to networking, collaborations and diverse research opportunities.



**Funding Gaps:** Limited funding tailored to the needs of caregiver-researchers further hinders their ability to fully engage in academic and professional communities.

The impact of gendered responsibilities on women researchers' ability to balance family commitments and research time cannot be overstated.

Academic institutions must play a critical role in addressing these disparities by implementing supportive policies and initiatives. This includes reviewing parental leave policies, providing access to affordable childcare, and offering flexible working arrangements.

Institutions should strive to create an environment that empowers and trusts women researchers. This involves fostering a culture of understanding and support, where women researchers feel valued and respected. It also means providing resources and opportunities that enable them to thrive professionally while managing their personal responsibilities effectively!



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

