



ANNUAL REPORT 2017



Royal African Society

www.royalafricansociety.org/annualreport

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ABOUT US

The Royal African Society is a membership organisation that provides opportunities for people to connect, celebrate and engage critically with a wide range of topics and ideas about Africa today. Through our events, publications and digital channels we share insight, instigate debate and facilitate mutual understanding between the UK and Africa. We amplify African voices and interests in academia, business, politics, the arts and education, reaching a network of more than one million people globally.

Find out more at:

-  www.royalafricansociety.org
-  www.facebook.com/royafrisoc
-  www.twitter.com/royafrisoc

JOIN TODAY

The Royal African Society is uniquely placed to connect you with a diverse network of African professionals and Africa experts across a wide range of sectors. Our membership is open to all – you can join whether you are a company with a business interest in Africa or an individual with a personal or professional connection to the continent. As a RAS member you will contribute to keeping Africa high on the UK's business, political and cultural agenda, enabling a positive shift in policy and public opinion. You would also be signing up to be part of the most dynamic, influential and (yes) fun Africa-focused organisation in the UK. So what are you waiting for? Join us today to become part of our vibrant network and start enjoying a wide range of exclusive members-only benefits!

Find out more about membership on page 24 or visit:
www.royalafricansociety.org/join-us

TEAM AND COUNCIL

COUNCIL

Chair

Zeinab Badawi

Vice Chairs

Phillip Alier
Alistair Boyd
Prof Christopher Cramer

Honorary Treasurer

Innes Meek

Council Members

Dr Titilola Banjoko
Susana Edjang
Boko Inyundo
Razia Khan
Gregory Kronsten
Robert Molteno
Anne McCormick
Dr Mpalive Msiska
Prof Mthuli Ncube
'Jide Olanrewaju

Co-opted Members

African Affairs

Co-Editors

Carl Death
Lindsay Whitfield
Peace A. Medie (from September 2017)

Ex Officio Member

ASAUK President

Dr Insa Nolte

TEAM

Director

Richard Dowden (until September 2017)
Dr Nicholas Westcott, CMG (from November 2017)

Deputy Director

Sheila Ruiz

Administrative Manager

Lizzie Orekoya

Membership Administrator

Melmarie Laccay

Africa APPG Research & Policy Co-ordinator

Lailah Nesbitt-Ahmed (covering for Hetty Bailey-Morgan)

African Arguments Editor

James Wan

Corporate Partnerships Manager

Shushan Tewolde-Berhan

Communications & Marketing Manager

Yovanka Paquette
Perdigão (until August 2017)

Africa Writes & Public Events
Programme Manager
Caitlin Pearson

Africa Writes
Festival Coordinator
Marcelle Akita

Education & Outreach
Programme Manager
Joanna Brown

Film Africa
Festival Producer
Rachael Loughlan

Film Africa
Festival Coordinator
Abel Kemal Endashaw

African Affairs
Co-Editors
Carl Death
Lindsay Whitfield
Peace A. Medie (from September 2017)

African Affairs
Book Reviews Editor
Dr Alexander Beresford

African Affairs
Editorial Assistant
Busani Mpfu

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A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR



Dear Friends, Members, Partners and future ones!

I hope this finds you all in good health and high spirits. I am delighted to be able to write this welcome note for my fourth year as Chair of the Royal African Society.

Every year brings something new out of Africa, and 2017 was another productive and eventful year for the Society. It continued to deliver a wide range of programmes sharing knowledge, ideas and insights on the most topical issues and cultural developments in Africa and its dynamic place in the world.

Our main highlights for the year included our respected Annual Lecture, delivered by Professor Carlos Lopes, leading development economist who had just stepped down as head of UNECA, the UN's Economic Commission on Africa; a high profile event with President Nana Akufo-Addo on the occasion of Ghana's 60th anniversary of independence in which he shared his vision for the continent; and our annual *Africa Writes* and *Film Africa* festivals - the latter of which was awarded the BFI Screen Diversity mark for good practice, meeting four out of four of the Diversity Standards. Our quarterly journal *African Affairs* saw a magnificent increase of 75% in total usage and our *African Arguments* site, which was redesigned in early 2017, also continued to grow its readership reaching well over one million hits, nearly half of them from Africa.

In January 2017 we welcomed H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge as our new Royal Patron and thanked Her Majesty The Queen, who gracefully held our patronage for 48 years. The Duke has shown a keen interest and enthusiastic commitment to our work and we hope to engage with him constructively in the coming years.

In September 2017, we bid good-bye to our former Director, Richard Dowden, who retired after 15 years ably leading the organisation. During his tenure, Richard was instrumental in shaping the RAS as the country's oldest yet most vibrant and forward-looking organisation dedicated to promoting Africa and its people to wide audiences both within and outside the continent. It is a testament to his vision, tenacity, energy and knowledge that the Society has become the institution it is today. I am delighted that he has been succeeded by Dr Nicholas Westcott. Nick has been engaged with Africa for four decades and brings to the post a wealth of academic, economic and diplomatic experience of the continent, having recently served in several African counties as ambassador. He brings passion and enthusiasm for the continent, its people and the Society and I'm certain it will flourish and develop under his stewardship and that of our Deputy Director, Sheila Ruiz.

As ever, the continued support of our members, partners and friends is crucial to our success and I would like to extend my most heart-felt thanks to everyone who has been involved with us in the last year and beyond. For those of you who are new to the Society, I extend a warm hand of welcome and hope that together we can move towards an exciting and prosperous future.

Zeinab Badawi
Chair

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



In 2017, the Royal African Society – like Africa, like Britain itself – went through a process of significant change. This can be unsettling, but also provides an opportunity to make a fresh start and launch new initiatives.

Africa has always had a dynamic relationship with the rest of the world. As the pace of change in the international arena accelerates and old certainties crumble, Africa needs to define its place, assert its interests and pick its partners. The withdrawal of US global leadership and the assertiveness of China and Russia in the world create a different context for Africa. European friends of Africa, including the United Kingdom, remain committed as investors, traders and partners in development and security. Nevertheless, to maintain its independence, as Ghanaian President Akufo-Addo told an RAS audience in November 2017, Africa has to take responsibility for securing its own people, developing its own economies and ensuring its own stability.

In this respect, 2017 saw some important steps forward. Across southern Africa new governments took over in Angola, Zimbabwe and (early in 2018) in South Africa itself. Tolerance for old corruption that enriched a few but left the poor behind to fend for themselves has been exhausted. The new Presidents need to be aware that public expectations are high: unless there is indeed a swift change for the better in terms of more jobs, more work, more freedom, they cannot expect the people to follow them compliantly for another decade, or maybe even another year.

In West Africa too, following the successful elections and transition in The Gambia, elections in Liberia brought the opposition, and Africa's first footballing President, to power. In East Africa, the roller-coaster that was Kenya's electoral process gave rise to both high hopes that the rule of law would hold the elections to the highest standards, and fears that the fragile democratic system was being tested to breaking point. The country held together, but there are crucial lessons for all to learn if transparent and trusted democracy is to be embedded in the country and the next elections to produce a result that all will accept.

Economically there has been a rebound in Africa, but a small one that leaves too many young people across the continent wondering where they will find a job or a livelihood in the future, and how they can bring up a family. For some, prospects still look rosier if they leave, and seek their fortune elsewhere – in the West if they can, in the East or South if they cannot. But far better to stimulate growth at home. In a world where the risk is of trade barriers springing up, Africa still aspires to create a Continental Free Trade Area and many governments are active in putting in place policies conducive to both

domestic and international investment and solid growth, including by tackling corruption.

The Royal African Society continues to engage with all these issues, as well as to highlight the continuing cultural dynamism of a continent undergoing rapid change.

On 1 November I took up the role of Director, after seven years working on African and the Middle East in Brussels. I would like to pay tribute to Richard Dowden whose ceaseless energy, enthusiasm and imagination over the past 15 years has built the RAS into the diverse and active Society that it now is. We now need not only to sustain its excellent programmes, but to take it to the next level.

Our objective remains to bring together all those in this country interested in or from Africa, to deepen knowledge about the continent, to provide a platform for Africa's voices to be heard and understanding between Britain and Africa to be enhanced, and to showcase the best of African arts and culture.

Our ambition is to strengthen all four pillars of the Society's work: academic, cultural and educational, business and political. As you can read in this report, the Society's journal, African Affairs, and news and analysis site, African Arguments, continue to grow and our festivals and events continue to attract sell-out crowds.

In all this we rely on you, our members and supporters, to enable us to sustain our efforts. 2017 was a challenging year financially for the Society, but thanks to our reserves we have been able to continue with our programmes while we build up the partnerships and membership that will ensure a sustainable future and enable us to expand our activities into new areas.

Relations between Britain and Africa are all about people, so understanding each other remains vital if all aspects of the relationship – economic, political, cultural, commercial – are to flourish, particularly in the face of political and popular pressures for insularity and isolation. 2018 will provide new opportunities to ensure Africa is better heard and better understood in this country and in the world.

Dr Nicholas Westcott, CMG
Director

“

Our objective remains to bring together all those in this country interested in or from Africa, to deepen knowledge about the continent, to provide a platform for Africa's voices to be heard and understanding between Britain and Africa to be enhanced, and to showcase the best of African arts and culture.

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Nicholas Westcott, Director

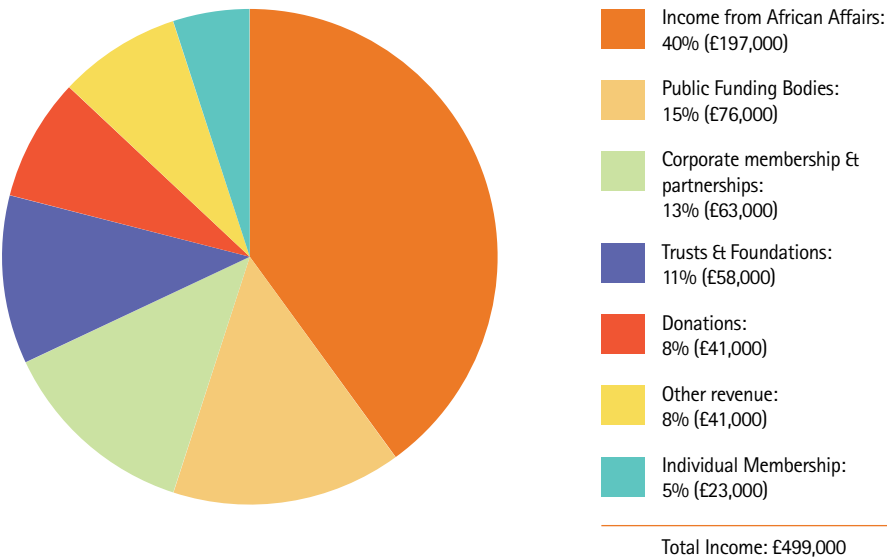
HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

From a financial point of view, 2017 was a sobering year for the Society. We have run small deficits since 2012 and have been drawing down on our substantial reserves to fund them, but the current shortfall (£106,000 in 2017) is not sustainable.

The explanation for this substantial deficit is that income has reduced by more than a quarter over the last two years and has now fallen to below £500,000. Over the past two years, donations have dropped from £115,000 in 2015 to £41,000 in 2017; income from corporates (in the form of membership subscriptions and partnerships offering support for specific RAS activities) fell from £140,000 to £63,000 over the same period. There has also been a drop in individual subscriptions. On the other hand, support from public bodies, at £76,000 in 2017, has doubled, which has enabled the Society to enhance its festivals and develop a new education and outreach programme. Costs have been cut including a temporary reduction in hours worked by staff during the last quarter of 2017.

Our newly-appointed Director has been tasked with restoring a balance between income and expenditure for the Society, while sustaining the level of activity. Council accepts this may take more than a year to achieve, but is looking for a significant reduction in the deficit in 2018 and a further reduction in 2019.

Innes Meek
Honorary Treasurer



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

For the year ended 31st December 2017

| | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| | £,000 | £,000 |
| Income and Expenditure Account | | |
| Incoming from: | | |
| Donations | 41 | 163 |
| Charitable Activities | | |
| Publications | 212 | 232 |
| Events and Festivals | 121 | 102 |
| Advancement of Knowledge | 110 | 79 |
| Other Trading Activities | 7 | 7 |
| Investment Income | 8 | 8 |
| Total Incoming | 499 | 591 |
| Expenditure on: | | |
| Raising Funds | 36 | 38* |
| Charitable activities | | |
| Publications | 131 | 166* |
| Events and Festivals | 237 | 245* |
| Advancement of Knowledge | 218 | 207* |
| Total expenditure | 622 | 656 |
| Net operating income/expenditure | (123) | (65) |
| Gain/Loss on revaluation of investments | 17 | 19 |
| Total net income/expenditure | (106) | (46) |
| Total Funds brought forward | 427 | 473 |
| Total Funds carried forward | 321 | 427 |
| Balance Sheet | | |
| Investments | 231 | 214 |
| Current assets | 161 | 266 |
| Current liabilities | (71) | (53) |
| Total net assets | 321 | 427 |

*2016 expenditure re-analysed to recognise fundraising costs for charitable activities as a cost of those activities rather than as Expenditure on Raising Funds

STRATEGIC REVIEW



In 2017, the Royal African Society team continued to work on implementing the five cross-cutting themes, or key objectives, which were identified to guide our 2016–2020 strategy. Progress on our current strategic plan and objectives is reviewed monthly at staff meetings and quarterly at meetings of the Council and Executive Committee. Under the collaborative leadership of our new Director, Nick Westcott, we are currently reviewing our 2020 strategy and setting new KPIs to re-focus our energy and efforts.

"Go Digital"

In 2017, our online visibility and reach grew significantly. We witnessed a 20% increase in our social media following and an overall online readership of 1.1M unique users or 1.9M hits across our different websites. The African Arguments website was revamped to be more aesthetically pleasing and user friendly and, at the time of writing, the RAS website is being redeveloped with the same aim. We are also in the final stages of developing a bespoke Customer Relationship Management system (Salesforce), which will allow us to better manage our contacts and members' data, as well as to prepare the Society to be compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation, which comes into force in May 2018.

Partnerships

Implementing a new partnership framework was a high priority for the Society in 2017 and we made considerable progress in this regard. We worked to enhance our engagement with our existing partners and also forged some important new partnerships with public funding bodies, trusts and foundations, and companies whose aims and vision aligned with ours. For a full list of our main partners in 2017, please see page 25.

Better Africa Networks

Linked to our partnership framework, we focused on developing our 'Africa networks' further by establishing mutually-beneficial relationships

with UK-based Africa-focused organisations and with international or African institutions, which have a presence on the continent, such as the British Council and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

Joined-up Working

In 2017, we continued to encourage and enable more joined-up working among the Society's staff through our weekly and monthly meetings. We also had several brainstorming sessions for everyone to feed into, allowing for cross-pollination of ideas across the different programmes. This in turn has had a positive effect on the internal team dynamics, as well as our external messaging and overall impact.

"Think funding"

Given the ongoing deficit, ensuring the Society's future sustainability and success continues to be a top strategic priority. In 2017 we sought expert help to build our internal capacity, which resulted in all team members being better informed and able to contribute to the Society's fundraising efforts. Although some progress was made, the Society still needs to do more work on this front and we are currently developing a new fundraising strategy.

Sheila Ruiz
Deputy Director



AFRICAN AFFAIRS

2017 was a big year for African Affairs, the Society's academic journal published by Oxford University Press (OUP), as it appointed a new, third editor and moved to an online submission system. Interdisciplinary and peer reviewed, the quarterly journal is widely read and available by subscription to almost 3,000 institutions worldwide. The Society's members receive complementary copies as part of their membership. African Affairs remains the world's top-ranked African studies journal by frequency of citation according to the Social Science Citation Index, and the latest Impact Factor (2016) rose to 2.577 from 1.904. This means the journal is now also ranked in the top 20 of 165 Political Science journals worldwide.

The journal saw a big increase in online usage with the number of full-text downloads rising to almost 235,000 in 2017 (up from 128,000 in 2016). Users in Africa account for almost 30,000 of these downloads. The top-read piece published in 2017 was a research note entitled 'Africa and international relations: Assembling Africa, studying the world' by Rita Abrahamsen with 1,678 views.

African Affairs continues to enjoy a global readership, both through its traditional subscription channels and OUP's Developing Countries scheme. This philanthropic initiative now offers online access to journal content to over 5,500 non-profit research institutions in over 100 countries, including 38 African countries.

New editor: Peace A. Medie

We are delighted to announce that Peace A. Medie joined African Affairs as the third Co-Editor in 2017. She is a Research Fellow in the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD) at the University of Ghana and an Oxford-Princeton Global Leaders Fellow. Peace was already an Editorial Board member, and was winner of the 2012-2013 African Authors Prize. She studies the enforcement of gender-based violence norms in Africa and civilian self-protection during conflict. Her research has been supported by grants from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, the African Peacebuilding Network, and the American Political Science Association and her findings have been published in African Affairs, International Studies Review, and Politics & Gender.

Move to online submission system

In October 2017 the journal transitioned to an automated online submission system, Scholar One, and this big shift has progressed well so far. This change will increase the journal's ability to collect, track and process data, such as submissions, authors, reviewers and so on, and make the administration of the journal more efficient and reliable. In the six months since the launch of the new system the journal has already received over 100 submissions, and 40 of these were from scholars based in Africa.

AFRICAN ARGUMENTS

African Arguments is a pan-African platform for news analysis, comment and opinion. We seek to analyse the key issues facing the continent, investigate the stories that matter and amplify a diversity of voices. African Arguments has become one of the top global websites for anyone trying to understand what is happening in Africa.

Readership

In 2017, African Arguments received over to 1.1 million page views and had nearly 700,000 unique users. Our readership in Africa, the largest portion of our audience, grew by nearly 19%.

We added dozens new contributors to our widening network. We published over 200 articles in the course of the year, over two-thirds of which were authored by writers of African descent. African Arguments articles were syndicated widely in African national newspapers as well as international outlets.

New website

The African Arguments website was redesigned to be more navigable, aesthetically-pleasing and mobile-friendly.

Analyse

African Arguments provided in-depth and accessible analysis on a range of stories. As well as offering unique perspectives on the major events of the year – such as the Kenyan elections, the fall of Robert Mugabe, and secessionist Biafran agitation – we also covered many lesser-reported issues. Amongst many other topics, this included democratic backsliding in Zambia and Tanzania, rising youth movements and protest techniques, and ongoing strife in the likes of Burundi, Togo and the two Congos.

Investigate

Of the investigative pieces published in 2017, two in particular stand out. The first was a joint investigation into expensive Montreal property owned by African leaders. The extensive report uncovered over a dozen politically-sensitive individuals from several different Francophone countries who had bought luxury Canadian real estate. The findings were widely reported and led to a case being opened against one of the figures named in Chad. The second was an investigation conducted into serious health emergencies in Arlit, Niger. The small, impoverished town is home to huge uranium mining projects operated by the French state-owned company Areva.

Amplify

African Arguments amplified a diversity of voices and perspectives. Amongst many others, we published pieces by a range of civil society activists, young people, up-and-coming commentators, and artists.

High profile insights

We held interviews with several high-profile figures. This included former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, Democratic Republic of Congo's opposition leader Moïse Katumbi, and Somaliland Foreign Minister Saad Ali Shire.

ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR AFRICA

The Africa All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is one of the largest and most active APPGs in Parliament with over 200 members from both Houses of Parliament and across all parties. The RAS helped to establish the Group in 2003 and has since provided the secretariat, research and policy coordination. The General Election of May 2017 significantly reduced the number of months available for meetings. Nevertheless the Africa APPG was able to hold 21 meetings, a mixture of closed briefings for parliamentarians and public panel discussions on topics within our thematic foci.

The future of Africa-UK trade

In February 2017, the APPG launched its inquiry report "The future of Africa-UK trade and development cooperation relations in the transitional and post Brexit period". Consisting of two parts, a delegation study report and an essay series, the report aims to unpack the potential opportunities that Brexit and accompanying new trade arrangements could present for Africa-UK trade. Through the critical analysis of the EU's current Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African countries to date, the report concludes in advocating for a relationship that supports African regionalism and industrialisation priorities.

The essay series included articles from a variety of stakeholders, from the President of the African Development Bank and the African Trade Policy Centre of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa, right down to smaller civil society organisations and movements. Each essay brought a fresh perspective to the report and addressed different thematic questions.

The case study was informed by the Africa APPG's delegation to Namibia and South Africa in September 2016, which explored how the SADC-EPA impacted on the region and investigated the degree of democratic oversight by Parliament and civil society during negotiations of the SADC-EPA. The report was launched in the Houses of Parliament in February 2017, with closing remarks provided by then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for DFID, James Wharton MP.

Following the release of the report, during the remainder of 2017 the APPG held a number of trade and investment related meetings with experts in this field, including Rob Davies, South African Minister of Trade and Industry; Abebe Selassie from the IMF's Africa Department; and Greg Hands MP, then Minister of State for Department for International Trade. Our chair, Chi Onwurah MP also moderated a Labour Party Conference event in partnership with ODI on "Trading and Investing with Africa after Brexit".

The Africa APPG continues to focus on the thematic areas of "Trade with and within Africa", "Parliamentary and democratic oversight and the role of civil society" and "the quality of decision making within UK Visas and Immigration" and welcomes requests from organisations and individuals who can contribute to these discussions.



royalafricansociety.org/appg-africa

@AfricaAPPG

BUSINESS PROGRAMME

At the RAS, we believe the private sector is a key vehicle for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in Africa. As part of our corporate membership offer, we curate high level events providing a platform for in-depth debate with key decision-makers, experts and thought leaders from the worlds of business, government, civil society and academia. Well-connected and independent, we explore contemporary trends and champion new and dynamic ideas that promote a positive approach to doing business in Africa.

Economies to Watch: Galvanising business for the future of the DRC

In 2017 we started a series entitled 'Economies to Watch' focusing on fast growing, increasingly diversified economies, which present new opportunities for RAS corporate members and other key stakeholders. We began the series by hosting Moïse Katumbi, Congolese businessman and politician, jointly with the Africa APPG in July. Followed by a conversation chaired by Zeinab Badawi, Moïse Katumbi shared his insights on the economic trajectory of the Democratic Republic of Congo and its potential to become a key driver of growth in the continent.

Africa's Booming Fintech Scene

In response to the fast-changing and fast-growing fintech sector in Africa, we hosted a special forum entitled 'Fintech in Africa: How to scale impact' in September, at which two panels of entrepreneurs and investors shared their insights on the trends that are shaping the continent's digital financial landscape – from payments and remittances to insurance and savings products. Organised in partnership with DLA Piper, Professionals for Africa, Innovate Finance, and the Africa Club at London Business School, this forum facilitated unique interactive discussions with practical tips, inspiration and useful resources shared by our panellists.

Ghana at 60

In 2017 our corporate members and partners enjoyed two exclusive events celebrating Ghana's 60th anniversary of independence, with Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs Shirley Ayorkor Botchway in May and President Nana Akufo-Addo in November.

RAS Corporate network

In 2017 we welcomed a range of new companies to our membership network including: Ecobank, Hogan Lovells, Dalberg Group, Leigh Day, Inmarsat, Kemet Group, The Cape Partnership, the Embassy of the Republic of Burundi in London, what3words and the African-Caribbean Network of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Our corporate members continued to contribute to the Society's wide-ranging programmes, from partnering with us on our dynamic public events and our high-level meetings with the Africa APPG to writing articles for African Arguments and sponsoring our cultural festivals.

To find out more about RAS corporate membership, please visit:
royalafricansociety.org/join-us



royalafricansociety.org/business



[@RoyAfriSoc](https://twitter.com/RoyAfriSoc)

PUBLIC EVENTS AND ANNUAL LECTURE

Our wide-ranging public events programme is our core offering to our members, who get free access or priority and discounted booking. With a total of 48 events and an audience of nearly 3,000 people, 2017 was another busy year for the Society.

Events as part of our strategic partnership with British Council

In January 2017, we took our annual 'Prospects and Forecasts' event on a three city tour of London, Edinburgh and Birmingham, jointly with the British Council. Adding to the discussions on politics, economics and society, we flew in Dr Njoki Ngumi of the Nest Collective in Kenya, who brought crucial perspectives from the world of contemporary arts. Some of these ideas were further explored at "The Arts Forum", a day-long conversation we co-hosted with the British Council in April. The forum brought together artists and programmers based in Africa with UK-based arts organisations to discuss best approaches to programming and developing partnerships around contemporary African arts.

Politics, Activism and Youth

Discussions on contemporary politics, activism and youth formed a key part of the public events programme, with a particular focus on Kenya, Eritrea and Ghana.

It was a year of uncertainty for East Africa's largest economy, with contested election results and the historic ruling by the Supreme Court calling for a re-run. In August we held a pre-election briefing with Njoki Wamai, Edwin Orero, Keni Kariuki, Justin Willis and Agnes Gitau, and in October, a conversation between academic Nic Cheeseman and renowned political cartoonist Godfrey Mwampembwa, a.k.a Gado, on the role of satire in Kenyan politics. That same month, Duncan Omega of Moi University delivered the Mary Kingsley Zochonis Lecture on the topic of political activism in social media spaces, focusing on Kenya's Nakuru district.

Turning to the ongoing issue of political repression in Eritrea, in May we collaborated on a special event to celebrate the Eritrean journalist and writer Dawit Isaak who has been detained without trial since 2001. We also hosted the launch of Martin Plaut's latest book, *Understanding Eritrea: Inside Africa's Most Repressive State*, with activist Vanessa Berhe and academic Idil Osman. The Eritrean diaspora joined the conversation online with over 15,000 people watching the livestream.

In July we co-covened a roundtable discussion on "Alternative forms of Protest in Africa" with the University of London's Centre of African Studies, featuring Nanjala Nyabola, Jenny Mbaye and Professor Stephen Chan. In October, Professor Carlos Lopes, leading development economist and former head of the UN's Economic Commission on Africa, delivered an outstanding Annual Lecture at SOAS focusing on how the youth will shape Africa's future.

To close the year we held a special event with President Nana Akufo-Addo at the V&A Museum where he put forward his vision of an 'Africa beyond aid'. The President's speech was live-streamed on Facebook and followed by a panel discussion, including businessman Herman Chinery-Hesse and Afrobeats star Fuse ODG.

Our partner organisation, the ASAUUK, began preparations for the 2018 biennial conference at the University of Birmingham, held Writing Workshops in Capetown, Freetown, Lagos, and Dar-es-Salaam, and provided support for African scholars to attend conferences.



Photo credit: Ivan Gonzalez

RAS Public Events are available to stream or download as podcasts from mixcloud.com/royafrisoc



royafricansociety.org/events



[@RoyAfriSoc](https://twitter.com/RoyAfriSoc)

AFRICA WRITES 2017

Established in 2012, Africa Writes is the Society's annual literature festival through which we promote, discuss and celebrate the work of contemporary African and diaspora writers. With over 50 of the most influential voices in contemporary African writing, the sixth edition of Africa Writes brought to the fore themes of language, archives, and ownership, attracting over 2,000 people. Our audiences were predominantly young and diverse, with 50% identifying themselves as black African.

Africa Writes opened with a sold-out event, a R.A.P. (Rhythm And Poetry) Party, filling the main space of the British Library with over 600 young African literature fans. Hosted by Inua Ellams and Theresa Lola and featuring Malika Booker, Kei Miller, Amaal Said, Yomi Sode and Roger Robinson among others, this special evening of hip-hop inspired poems and songs, attracted hundreds of African poetry fans to the British Library, setting the tone for the rest of the festival.

The weekend's programme was packed with discussions ranging from the politics of translation, the plethora of festivals and literary networks growing across the continent, and how African writers are remembered and canonised. Book launches included *The Chibok Girls* by Helon Habila; *When We Speak of Nothing* by Olumide Popoola; *No Place to Call Home* by JJ Bola; and a special joint launch event with two remarkable diaspora poets who had released new collections, *Kumukunda* by Kayo Chingonyi and *Kingdom of Gravity* by Nick Makoha. We held family story-telling sessions,

a kanga workshop, a professional advice session on how to get published, and a masterclass for writers wanting to improve their editing skills.

Our Saturday night headline was a story-telling double-bill featuring Mara Menzies and Maimouna Jallow who rendered their brilliant performance adaptations of the written word. On Sunday evening, we closed the festival with headline author Alain Mabanckou, Francophone Africa's literary icon and a leading ambassador of Congolese *sapologie*. Chaired by Dr Madhu Krishnan, Mabanckou captured the imaginations of a packed audience.

A collaboration with the Jalada Africa Mobile Literary and Arts festival took the Africa Writes team to East Africa to work on education and poetry projects in Rwanda and Tanzania. This helped to expand our contacts and networks in East Africa, and in turn enabled our collaborators connect with audiences in London. The festival also held discussions, performances and workshops in Edinburgh, Blackwood (Wales), Bristol and Birmingham, bringing African literature and writers to new enthusiastic audiences across the UK.

AFRICA WITES 2018

Africa Writes 2018 will take place from Friday 29 June to Sunday 1 July.



Photo credit: Ivan Gonzalez

“
If you want to understand
the continent, you first need
to write about what's going
on in your own home.

”

Alain Mabanckou

FILM AFRICA 2017

Established in 2011, Film Africa is now the UK's premier platform for African cinema and a key event in London's cultural calendar. The festival exists to celebrate the dynamism and diversity of African cinema giving African and diaspora filmmakers a platform to showcase their work to diverse UK audiences.

In 2017, Film Africa presented 38 films from 20 different countries (including 20 World, European or UK premieres) and hosted 12 filmmakers and on-screen talent, as well as 19 industry contributors to take part in post-screening Q&As and discussions. The festival attracted 3,600 people at 6 different London venues with 40% of screenings selling out. As in previous years, our audiences were predominantly young (69% aged 20-40) and ethnically diverse (43% described themselves as Black African/British/Caribbean, 35% as White/White Other, and 12% as mixed) and our festival was awarded the BFI Screen Diversity mark for good practice, meeting four out of four of the Diversity Standards.

Film Africa 2017 opened at the BFI Southbank with South African director John Trengove's bold debut feature *The Wound*. The Opening Gala and party was the best attended to date with over 400 attendees, cementing Film Africa's relationship with the UK's leading body for film. A new partnership with the National Film & Television School, where students assisted with viewing our growing number of submissions, encouraged an appreciation and knowledge of African cinema in the next generation of film programmers; and our *Film*

Africa: Young Audiences programme hosted over 800 school children and college students across seven screenings, building future audiences of African film.

Our Baobab Award for Best Short Film and our Audience Award for Best Feature Film continued to position Film Africa as a festival of discovery. El Hadj Gueye's *Waly's Problem* (Senegal) was selected as the winner of the 7th Baobab Award for Best Short Film by a jury of industry professionals and audiences voted Daryne Joshua's *Call Me Thief [Noem My Skollie]* (South Africa) as the unequivocal winner of the Film Africa 2017 Audience Award for Best Feature.

Film Africa 2017 received widespread and high profile media coverage, including: BBC Radio 4 Women's Hour, BBC World Service, The Guardian, The Metro, London Live TV, Time Out, Sight & Sound, Shadow & Act, gal-dem, among others.

FILM AFRICA 2018

Film Africa 2018 will take place from Friday 2 to Sunday 11 November.



“

I'd like to thank Film Africa and the Royal African Society for creating a platform for African filmmakers to share their stories. Most importantly, to the London audience – thank you for coming out and opening yourself to the diverse cinema of Africa – I'm glad you were engaged. I hope this is the beginning of a long and rewarding artistic relationship.

”

Daryne Joshua, Director of 'Call Me Thief', winner of the Film Africa 2017 Audience Award for Best Feature

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Since its launch in 2016, the Society's Education and Outreach programme has gone from strength to strength thanks to our creative approaches, a growing network and new partnerships.

Africa Writes: Young Voices 2017

Through *Africa Writes: Young Voices*, our creative writing programme, we worked closely with over 150 students in 11 schools, in partnership with talented poets and leading cultural institutions. Rachel Long and Theresa Lola facilitated a series of poetry sessions at Phoenix Place School, where students were inspired by Autograph ABP's Exhibition in a Box to write poetry spotlighting the lives of Black Britons in Victorian England. Nick Makoha coached a group of budding writers at London Nautical School for Boys through their exploration of black masculinity and the Afrikult. team, Marcelle Mateki Akita and Zaahida Nabagereka, ran compelling African literature workshops at Parliament Hill School for Girls. Other workshops took place at Somerset House around their Malick Sidibe exhibition and the British Museum around their South Africa: Art of a Nation exhibition. Workshops culminated in our inaugural Africa Writes: Young Voices showcase event at the British Library, where nearly 100 students performed their work in front of a live audience as part of Africa Writes 2017.

Film Africa: Young Audiences 2017

Working once more with Picturehouse Cinemas, we brought *Film Africa: Young Audiences* to over 800 school students through a fresh film programme comprising an animation package, feature films and archive material. At our interactive "Animating Africa" workshops, primary school children learned about Yoruba deities through stunning stop-motion animated shorts and teaching resources were distributed

to teachers to support further learning. We also partnered with the Independent Cinema Office to screen and discuss archive material from their Black Britain on Film programme at Lambeth College, showcasing rarely-seen footage from the 1960s cine-magazine programme London Line.

Heritage & Adult Learning

In 2017 we also initiated a new Community Outreach project drawing on significant Sierra Leonean Krio heritage material to inspire poetry, narrative fiction and life writing for adults. Twenty Sierra Leonean Krio men and women attended a series of workshops at the British Library, exploring rarely-seen items in the Library's African collections telling the story of the fascinating journeys of the Krio communities through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Through our contributions to key educational conferences and platforms, RAS Education is fast establishing itself as a significant voice on the educational stage and our education network continues to thrive.

To find out more about
the RAS Education
Programme, please visit:



www.royalafricansociety.org/ras-education



Photo credit: Ivan Gonzalez

“

Perspectives have
changed since back in
the day when Mali got
their independence
And danced the night
away...

”

Year 8 student, Addey
and Stanhope School

OUR MEMBERS

The Royal African Society has a diverse and influential membership network made up of individuals, companies and organisations who take a proactive interest in Africa and value opportunities to connect, share ideas and develop partnerships. We offer individual, student, friend and corporate membership packages.

Individual Membership

Our individual membership is jointly held with the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) – the national academic association for Africanist scholars within the UK – and provides members with a wide range of exclusive benefits and discounts. In 2017, we had a total of 936 members, including 712 individual members, 153 student members, 43 Life Members and 28 ASAUK Associates.

Corporate Membership

RAS corporate membership offers companies valuable insight, networking opportunities, brand visibility and government relations. We enable our members to better understand the social, economic and political contexts in which they operate, giving them a competitive advantage when doing business in Africa. In 2017 we had over 50 corporate members and partners from a diverse range of sectors spanning financial and professional services to FMCGs and agribusiness. Some of our corporate members and partners in 2017 are listed below.



Membership Benefits

- **FREE subscription** to African Affairs, the world's top-rated African Studies journal (worth £82 for individuals and £540 for companies)
- **FREE access** to SOAS Library, the world's largest reference library on Africa (worth £200 for individuals or £450 for companies)
- **FREE or PRIORITY** entry to our flagship Annual Lecture, our festivals and other high-profile events
- **Discounted entry** to the ASAUK's Biennial Conference (worth £85)
- **Discounted subscription** to Africa Confidential (50% off 1st year) and The Africa Report (30% off 1st year)
- **Plus exclusive** members' news and many other attractive benefits brokered through our partnerships!

Individual £85

Student £40

Friend £120

Corporate £2,400
inc. vat

OUR PARTNERS

As a charity, the RAS fosters partnerships with companies and organisations which share our values. Working in partnership is fundamental to our organisational strategy and future. Through our partnerships we aim to:

- Enhance our events and programmes
- Reach new audiences and networks
- Share resources and expertise
- Develop research and insight
- Amplify ideas or campaigns
- Achieve sustainability

Through our new partnership framework, we reviewed and reconfigured our partnerships into the following categories:

Strategic Partnerships with organisations and institutions who are aligned with our values and share our objectives. In 2017, we held strategic partnerships with the British Council, SOAS and UNECA.

Corporate Partnerships based on mutually beneficial relations. In 2017, our corporate donors and partners included Air France, CDC Group plc, Ernst & Young, Prudential, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank, Tullow Oil, Unilever and WorldRemit.

Funding Partnerships, which enable our programmes to grow and flourish. In 2017, our funding partners included the Arts Council England, the BFI Audience Fund, Foyle Foundation, Miles Morland Foundation and the Sigrid Rausing Trust.

Event and Programme Partnerships, which help us develop, enhance and deliver our events and programmes. In 2017 these included the Africa Club at London Business School, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Innovate Finance and Professionals for Africa among many others.

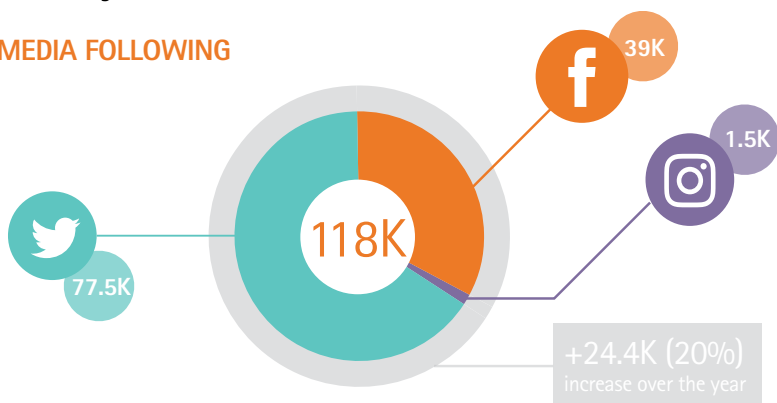
Media and Marketing Partnerships leveraged by our global network of over one million people. In 2017 we set up reciprocal partnerships with Alt-Africa, Africa in Words, Afreada, Bookshy Blogger, Brittle Paper and Wiriko Magazine.

If you would like to partner with us, please get in touch by emailing ras@soas.ac.uk

OUR AUDIENCES AND IMPACT

At the Royal African Society we now reach over a million people globally through our events, festivals, publications, online platforms and social media channels. Our audiences are diverse and reflective of the continent's youthful demographic with almost half of them under the age of 35. In 2017 our audience reach and impact grew significantly. Below are some key stats and figures.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING



ONLINE READERSHIP (websites)



LIVE AUDIENCES



75%

increase in total annual usage for African Affairs journal

19%

increase in readership from Africa for African Arguments

18-35

Young and diverse audiences with over 40% aged between 18-35 and 50% of African heritage.

26,000

Over 26,000 unique subscribers across all our different newsletters

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank our members, partners and all the individuals who contributed to the success of the Royal African Society in 2017. The RAS, its programmes and networks, are made possible by your support and participation.

We thank the Co-Editors of African Affairs, [Lindsay Whitfield](#), Carl Death and [Peace A. Medie](#); the many contributors; and [Vanessa Lacey](#), Senior Publisher at Oxford University Press, along with the rest of the team at OUP, who continued to deliver the highest-rated African Studies journal in the world.

Thank you [Baroness Valerie Amos](#), Director of SOAS, for continuing to host us at SOAS. We are very proud to be a part of the university.

Thank you [Chi Onwurah MP](#), Chair of the Africa All Party Parliamentary Group, Co-Chair [Lord Chidgey](#) and all the parliamentarians and staff who work on Africa at Parliament.

Appreciative thanks go out to our strategic partners, institutional funders and corporate supporters in 2017 – Arts Council England, Air France, British Council, BFI Audience Fund, CDC Group plc, Ernst & Young, Foyle Foundation, Miles Morland Foundation, Prudential, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Tullow Oil, Unilever and WorldRemit – for enabling us to continue delivering our events and programmes to wide audiences.

Our 2017 Public Events Programme was made possible through collaboration with the following partners: SOAS; ASAUK; Centre of African Studies at the University of London; Firoz Lalji Centre for Africa at LSE; International Development Department and Department of African Studies and Anthropology at the University of Birmingham; International Office, Centre of African Studies and the Sustainable Business Initiative at the University of Edinburgh; British Museum; Hurst; FUNDA; Arts for Action; GBS Africa; Frontline Club; Ghana High Commission; and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Africa Writes and Africa Writes Young Voices 2017 were made possible through our generous crowd-funder supporters and the collaboration of: British Library, British Council, British Museum, Afrikult, Afrika Eye Festival, Autograph APB, Birmingham Literature Festival, Cassava Republic, English PEN, D237, Inua Ellams' R.A.P. Party, Hamilton House, Huza Press, Jalada Africa, Matugga Rum, Numbi Arts, Octavia Poetry Collective, Poetry Translation Centre, Royal Society of Literature, Saraba Magazine, The Caine Prize for African Writing, The Literary Consultancy, The Cube, Transition Journal and Velvet Coalmine Festival.

Film Africa and Film Africa Young Audiences 2017 were made possible through the collaboration of the following: venues BFI Southbank, Rich Mix, Ritzy Brixton, Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Ciné Lumière and the South London Gallery; sponsors Divine Chocolate, Karma Cola and Morton Hotel; partner festivals Afrika Eye, Africa in Motion, Cambridge African Film Festival, and Watch Africa; and programme partners Film London, Independent Cinema Office, Into Film, NFTS, Lambeth College, De Charles, Okiki, October Gallery and the Centre of African Studies at the University of London.

And finally to all our speakers, interns, volunteers and friends of RAS who devoted time voluntarily to the work of the Society – **Thank You!**

Join the RAS network, please visit:
www.royalafricansociety.org/join-us

For more information and to partner with the RAS, please email us: ras@soas.ac.uk.



Photo credit: Ivan Gonzalez

JOIN US IN 2018

Learn | Debate | Connect | Celebrate

www.royalafricansociety.org/join-us

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