



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

ROYAL
AFRICAN
SOCIETY 
120 YEARS OF CHANGE

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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 and a half million people globally.

Find out more:

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

A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR



Dear Members, Partners, and Friends

I am honoured to be writing to you as Chairperson of the Royal African Society. I hope that this note finds you and your families in excellent health.

I am delighted to have been serving as your Chairperson, since the end of July 2021 and during the Society's 120th anniversary year celebrations. Our organisation has a phenomenal history having started in memory of Mary Kingsley, a travel writer and ethnographer, who wished to create a society that could unite academia, politics, economics, art and culture around a shared interest in and deep understanding of Africa. Since its founding, 120 years ago, the Society has continued to serve Africa, the U.K. and society through its distinct role in hosting platforms that enable connection, learning, debate and celebration of Africa. Through its widely acclaimed programmes and its global network, it has also continued to evolve and adapt in this laudable mission of amplifying Africa's voice, globally.

My colleagues on the Council and I are committed to serving you, more so, in a world replete with challenges and opportunities. Indeed, we are not only facing the aftermath of a devastating pandemic, but also existential challenges of poverty, inadequate social cohesion and climate change. We are also implementing initiatives to ensure that the Royal African Society is responsive to the needs of the world and helps embed Africa's place in enabling a prosperous and safe world.

During my first five months as Chairperson, I saw first hand our unique approach to serving Africa, those who care for Africa and society at large. For example, ahead of COP26, the Society drew attention to the key issues that Africa and its partners must address, by co-hosting, with Africa Confidential and the International Crisis Group, a major conference on climate, conflict and demography. Our Africa Writes Festival in October 2021, not only showcased the best and the brightest African writers, but also provided masterclasses on the African literary genre to young and old alike. In respect of curating opportunities for African leaders to interact with important stakeholders when they visit the U.K. I was delighted to host Mr Hakainde

Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia. Our 120th anniversary lecture, given by Ms Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General, United Nations, gave attendees an opportunity to better understand the sustainable development goals and the role of individuals, public and private sectors in ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth for Africa. We hosted other programmes and initiatives that leveraged our membership and the over 1.5 million people we connect with through our various platforms.

While we are humbled by the enormity of the challenges the world faces today, we are encouraged by our track record to continue to work with you to mobilise people and resources for our pioneering activities. We are also keen to build on the impactful advantages that technology has accorded us and are implementing new ideas that will help us achieve our objectives and scale up our activities. 2022 therefore promises to be another important year for us as we return to in-person programmes, including Film Africa, our flagship festival. We will also continue to deliver impactful initiatives through our partnership with the 200-member All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Africa. We are equally delighted that

we are able to broaden our reach through our partnership with the African Studies Association U.K. (ASAUUK), our African Arguments platform and widely respected African Affairs journal.

My sincere appreciation to each and every one of you - our indefatigable staff, Council, members, partners, and our Royal Patron, for your contributions to a successful year for our Society. You make us who we are and through your sacrifices, we are able to deliver on our mandate.

I look forward to us working together for a better future for Africa and society at large. I also wish you great success in all your endeavours.

Arunma Oteh
Chairperson,
The Royal African Society



Zambia: The Next 5 Years
Credit: Alex Mayeye

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



2021 was a tough year. But both Africa and the Society have again proven their resilience, the Society marking 120 years since its foundation in 1901.

As the rest of the world bounced back from the first wave of the Covid pandemic, Africa continued to suffer economic consequences and was disadvantaged by the unequal global distribution of vaccines. By the end of 2021, less than 10% of Africa's population had been fully vaccinated, only Egypt and Morocco achieving over 50%. With new variants having a major impact on more developed countries, those governments might reflect that doing more to help others would actually help themselves. But in Africa life continued – affected by the virus, but getting on despite it. The slow economic recovery and growing impact of climate change caused some political turbulence, but not everywhere. Zambia followed Malawi in a peaceful democratic transfer of power to opposition parties, Tanzania saw a smooth succession following the unexpected demise (probably from Covid) of its (Covid-denying) President, and countries with relatively robust and transparent political systems, like South Africa, remained stable despite the stresses. But the return of military rule in Sudan, Mali, Chad and Guinea, the last following President Condé's unpopular decision to run for a third term, looked to some like a return to the bad old days. The vicious civil war in Ethiopia put the stability of the whole Horn at risk. Somalia (like Libya) struggled to find a political consensus on how to hold elections, giving Al-Shabab opportunities to exploit the divisions. Elsewhere, some presidents' autocratic tendencies might have achieved 'stability' by locking up opponents, but stored up trouble for the future.

Africa's elections in 2022 – in Kenya, Angola, Tunisia and (with luck), Mali, Libya and Somalia – will show which way the political wind is blowing.

The outside world continues to engage with Africa. Many western countries remain focussed on security, development, democracy, migration and human rights, while China, Russia, Turkey and the Gulf countries sought primarily allies and economic opportunities. Which influence predominates is in African hands.

Despite the constraints on holding physical events, the Society has continued to provide platforms for a wide range of African

voices, with a particular focus on climate, gender, education and history.

Our 120th Anniversary events drew big audiences, particularly the major conference on Climate, Conflict and Demography in Africa, co-hosted with the International Crisis Group and Africa Confidential, which delivered its conclusions to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, and our Annual Lecture given by UN Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammed on a just and sustainable energy transition for Africa. We also hosted a meeting in London for the new President of Zambia, Hakainde Hichilema.

The voices of African women were a central feature of this year's Africa Writes festival, producing some of the best, most innovative and most radical writing anywhere at this time. Bringing black poetry into the primary classroom was also the central plank of our education programme, and following up the Black Lives Matter movement, the Society supported a major Parliamentary inquiry, chaired by Lord Paul Boateng, into how Africa should be dealt with in the British school curriculum, to be published in early 2022. African Affairs (two of whose three editors are women) reinforced its position as Africa's leading political

science journal by increasing its impact factor and publishing more African authors than ever before, while African Arguments continued to expand its readership worldwide and launched a fellowship programme to support African journalists.

Our Chair of seven years, Zeinab Badawi, stepped down, receiving (along with Graça Machel and Miles Morland) the Society's Award for a Lifetime Contribution to Africa. We warmly welcome Arunma Oteh as her successor.

The Anniversary also provided an opportunity for a deeper reflection on the Society's own history and purpose. The Society's history (available on our website and reprinted in longer form in African Affairs) illustrates how Britain's relationship with Africa has changed over time, and underlines the importance of being honest about the past, the bad as much as the good. It also reinforced the importance of our mission now to put African voices at the centre of British and global conversations. That is what we will continue doing this year, and I hope for many years to come.

Nick Westcott
Director



Director Dr. Nicholas Westcott
Credit: xxxxxxxx

HIGHLIGHTS



Key Achievements

- A major international conference on *Climate, Conflict and Demography in Africa* to highlight African messages for the COP 26 Glasgow Summit.
- The biennial Africa Writes festival on '*Imagination, pleasure and activism*' during October, held as a hybrid event, online and in person.
- Two events held in June to mark the Society's 120th Anniversary, one on the history of the Society, the other on Africa-UK relations featuring British and Kenyan ministers, both re-examining Britain's and the Society's past and present relationship with Africa, the better to understand each other by being honest about the past.
- Launching the inaugural African Arguments Fellowships, which elicited a very large and encouraging response, while the website continued to increase its audience.
- One of the Royal African Society's nominees for The Earthshot Prize, the Pole Pole Foundation which conserves rainforest as habitat for Grauer's gorillas in the Democratic Republic of Congo, involving the local community in related development projects, was selected as one of the finalists. John Kahekwa, the founder, was invited to participate in COP26 in Glasgow with our Royal Patron, and the Society held a panel on his and other community-based conservation work.
- The Society's Poetry in the Primary Classroom education project won plaudits from all who participated in it. Bringing black poets into schools inspired both pupils and teachers with what they can do, and has bequeathed some wonderful resources available on our website. We plan to build on this in the year ahead."



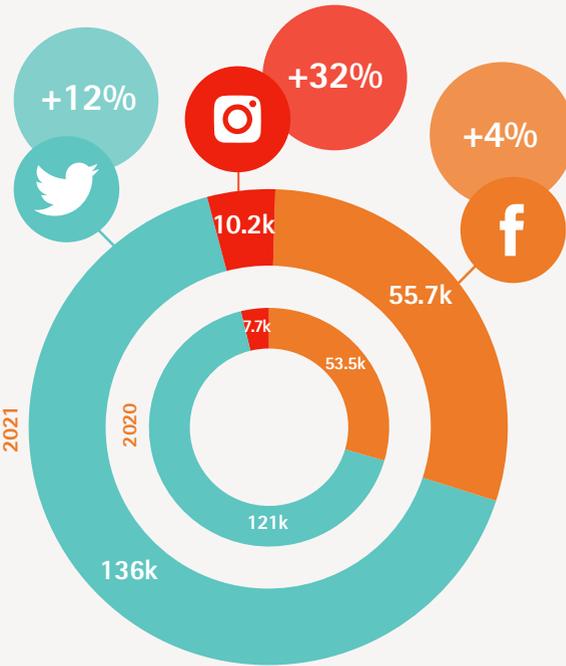
Overall, the Society has continued to have impact across a wide range of areas with a modest budget and small staff, expanding its online footprint despite our ability to hold physical meetings and engage with our local audience still being constrained by the pandemic.



Our Chairperson with UN DSG Amina J. Mohammed.
Credit: Ivan Gonzalez

OUR AUDIENCE AND IMPACT

In 2021 we reached 7 million people globally mainly through our Africa Writes festival's media, social media and partner collaborations. African Arguments continued to attract a strong readership, and launched a brand new fellowship programme. Hybrid events became the new normal as we continued to operate in precarious times, but this meant our guests could tune in easily from London, Ibadan, Lagos, or Abuja (our top cities for online engagement according to our Africa Writes survey).



Africa Writes Festival highlights included:

Dismantling the Patriarchy

with award-winning American-Egyptian journalist, activist and author Mona Eltahawy and Dr Leyla Hussein

Inherited: All Our Names

an evening of poetry, dance, film and sound exploring names we inherit with Raymond Antrobus, Catrina Nisbett, Mara Menzies, and films of Sethembile Msezane and David Ellington.

24

events
(8 more than the 16 originally planned)

11

panels or in-conversations

2

performances

7

workshops for young people

3

workshops for adults

1

writing masterclass

PARTNERSHIPS WITH
3 AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

Kaduna Book and Arts Festival in Nigeria, Ghana's Pa Gya! A Literary Festival and Kenya's AfroQueer Podcast



A major international online conference on Climate, Conflict and Demography in Africa to highlight African messages for the COP 26 Glasgow Summit that attracted over **2000 people**



The biennial Africa Writes festival on 'Imagination, Pleasure and Activism' during October, held as a hybrid event, online and in person. Nearly **1,000 people** attended Africa Writes 2021 in-person or online



The inauguration of the first African Arguments Fellowship to which over **500 young African journalists** applied



Two events held in June to mark the Society's **120th Anniversary**, one on the history of the Society, the other on Africa-UK relations featuring British and Kenyan ministers, both re-examining Britain's and the Society's past and present relationship with Africa

2021 at a glance



In partnership with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa and Justice to History, we supported a Parliamentary Inquiry into 'Africa in the UK Curriculum', chaired by Lord Paul Boateng, to help change the way Africa is represented in schools

STRATEGIC REVIEW



2021 was not the brand new chapter we all might have dreamt of after 2020, but it was new and progress was made. Stepping into the role of Deputy Director was an exciting opportunity with much to learn from Sheila Ruiz's brilliant decade prior, Fundraising and Partnerships manager Caitlin Pearson's successful five years, and Zeinab Badawi's wonderful seven year run as Chairperson. 2021 brought an influx of new people: myself, Sonia Foday as Fundraising and Partnerships manager, Jack Patterson, providing maternity cover as our Policy & Advocacy Coordinator for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa, a series

of Communications freelancers, and Chairperson Arunma Oteh.

The Arts & Culture membership is a new offering that we hope will serve and connect our Africa Writes and Film Africa audiences and increase Membership Engagement. Years ago, when I volunteered for Film Africa, I was stunned to discover that RAS was such a small organisation. Now that I am part of it, I see that the results are achieved through the incredibly hard work of this tight knit team, the Council, and a vast network of supportive partners across all of our programmes.

Connect

The feasibility of in person events fluctuated throughout the year but we managed to reach large audiences online through our Africa Writes events, our Climate, Conflict and Demography conference, and the very first African Arguments fellowship which saw 500 young journalists apply. The UK's Zambian community turned up in force to support their newly elected President Hakainde Hichilema as he delivered Zambia: The Next Five Years, and we presented a talk with the UN's Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammed for our Annual Lecture.

Learn

The 'Poetry in the Primary Classroom' pilot project, led by Olivia Danso, made a deep and positive impact on the students, teachers, poets and schools that took part. The Africa APPG examined the representation of Africa in the UK Curriculum and collaborated on an important report with Justice 2 History. Africa Writes Young Voices provided online workshops to young people alongside the festival programming. African Affairs remains the world's' top-ranked African Studies journal in the world.

Desta Haile
Deputy Director

Debate

African Arguments, our news and analysis site, received over 1.5 million visits to its informative, thought-provoking platform, and its Debating Ideas sub-section, run independently by the International African Institute (IAI) and sponsored by the World Peace Foundation (WPF), published over 100 articles.

Celebrate

Africa Writes centred the themes of Imagination, Pleasure and Activism and there was a palpable sense of community and celebration at The British Library during the Headliner weekend. Writer Mona Eltahawy shared that it was her first trip since the pandemic; what an honour for Africa Writes! Kenyan writer, professor and activist Micere Mugo received the Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to African literature. At our Annual Lecture, three other awards were presented to Zeinab Badawi, Graça Machel and Miles Morland for their lifetime contributions to Africa.



Temesgen Zeleke
Credit: Ivan Gonzalez

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 and corporate membership packages.

During 2021 we launched our new membership package – the Arts and Culture Membership – catered to members who love attending our events, conferences and festivals. With our wide range of events, including Africa Writes, over the last 12 months – our work has continued to appeal to an eclectic audience.

In 2021, we had a total of 446 members, including 312 Individual, 19 Friend, 35 Student, 6 Associate, 4 Lifetime, 27 Arts and Culture and 43 Honorary Life Members. We encouraged members to upgrade their membership, and for longstanding members to join as Lifetime members. Our members continue to express their enthusiasm for belonging to the Society in 2021:

“

To be part and contribute in all Africa affairs for betterment of the continent.

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“

Generally, it'd be really nice to connect with others that share the same passions with me and see whether some positive change can occur together.

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“

To be part of a vibrant, knowledgeable, international community that loves Africa.

”



Zambia: The Next 5 Years
Credits: Alex Mayeye

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Our membership is open to all. It only takes a few minutes to sign up via our website, so join today!

Connect

- Joint membership with the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK), the primary organisation that facilitates links between UK and African institutions and scholars.
- Opportunities to network with like-minded people interested in Africa and establish professional connections and partnerships.
- Share and receive news in our exclusive members' newsletters.

Learn

- Subscription to African Affairs, the world's top-rated African Studies journal (worth £82).
- Access to SOAS Library, the world's largest reference library on Africa (worth £200).
- Discounted tickets to the ASAUK Biennial Conference (worth £85).

Debate

- Free or discounted entry to our programme of public events, where we tackle some of the most pressing issues affecting the continent today.
- Opportunity to feed into the advocacy and policy work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Africa, which we administer.

Celebrate

- Priority booking and discounted tickets to our cultural festivals Africa Writes and Film Africa.
- Exclusive invitations to high-profile celebratory events, such as the reception with our Royal Patron, HRH The Duke of Cambridge, and other members-only events.

Extra benefits

- Discounts on subscriptions to other journals and publications, including The Africa Report (30% off 1st year) and selected books with publishers James Currey and Boydell & Brewer.
- Third party discounts brokered through our partnerships.

Support our work

Your membership is vital and helps sustain our charitable mission of amplifying African voices and interests to facilitate mutual understanding between people in the UK, Africa and the wider world.

Individual £85

Student £40

Friend £120

Arts & Culture £35

Corporate £2,400
inc. VAT

Please request our Corporate Brochure for more information on our customised Bronze, Silver, Gold and Diamond Partnerships.

AFRICAN AFFAIRS

The editors worked hard throughout the pandemic to keep the journal operating as normal, with considerable success. The 2020 Impact Factor (of 3.2) places African Affairs 4th out of 80 journals in the Area Studies category, and as **the top Africanist journal worldwide**.

Articles

In 2021 the journal continued to publish cutting-edge research on many of the important issues affecting Africa today. Tefera Negash Gebregziabher's article 'Ideology and power in TPLF's Ethiopia: A historic reversal in the making?' (2019, Vol. 118, Issue 472) was most accessed in 2021. Nicole Beardsworth's article, 'Zimbabwe: The coup that never was, and the election that could have been' (2019 Vol 119, Issue 472) was the most cited article in the year. The Co-Editors expanded the Country and Thematic Reading Lists, which were introduced in 2019 to assist readers in navigating the breadth of research published in the journal, as well as to cover topics that inform debate and advance scholarship on contemporary Africa. The 13 Country Reading Lists now include the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Rwanda. The 11 Thematic lists include: Health, Education, Neopatrimonialism and Political Settlements, Religion and Politics.

Virtual Issue

The journal published a Virtual Issue on Ghana in November 2020 to mark the country's general election. The introduction to the issue was written by Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai and Naaborle Sackeyfio and all articles in the issue were free to download until March 2021.

Prizes

The journal's two prizes- the African Author Prize, and the Stephen Ellis Prize, were not awarded in 2021, but should resume in 2022.

Free access to all the journal's articles is available online to Society members.

AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF THE AUK

ASAUK, the sister organisation to RAS, has continued its scholarly activities over the past year. Having held all our meetings online over the last two years, we have achieved a wider global attendance than previously.

Lectures and Writing Workshops

Our Mary Kingsley Zochonis (MKZ) lecture series, which runs biennially, had two presenters who gave their lectures to us this year on Zoom. In lieu of having an ASAUK funded visit to a UK African Studies or History Department both scholars took up the offer to participate in a panel at the Africa Studies Association Meeting in 2022 that took place in Cape Town in April 2022. ASAUK affiliated members were also able to run three successful British Academy funded writing workshops, two being entirely online, (an Architecture writing workshop in Nigeria-Ghana, and an academic writing workshop in Lagos, Nigeria) and one taking place on site in Kenya.

The ASAUK Biennial Conference

We are now planning our ASAUK Biennial conference: *Restitution, Culture and Capital*. This will be an innovative event. With further funding from the British Academy, we will be delivering an online conference running for three days from, successively, Ibadan Nigeria, Nairobi Kenya, and Liverpool in the UK. A smaller 'in-person' conference hosted by the University of Liverpool will take place after the online event. We will be welcoming a rich mix of speakers from the cultural, academic, and business worlds as we explore what diaspora cultures mean in a post-covid UK landscape.

We are fortunate in having Flutterwave as sponsors for the ASAUK conference and awards dinner, at which we will be presenting a number of awards.

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We are now planning our ASAUK Biennial conference: *Restitution, Culture and Capital*. [...] We will be welcoming a rich mix of speakers from the cultural, academic, and business worlds as we explore what diaspora cultures mean in a post-covid UK landscape.

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Despite the challenges of the past two years, we have also managed to refresh our website and constitution, and importantly work closely with RAS in supporting the APPG work on African history education in UK schools, as well as with the hosting of various lectures. As my ASAUK term of office draws to a close we look forward to working more closely with RAS in the future and gaining an even wider audience and membership as we develop programmes and events that enable us to reach out to Africa and beyond through digital and other means.

Ola Uduku

President ASAUK 2020 – 2022

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.

Readers and Writers

In 2021, African Arguments received 1.5 million page views and 945,000 unique visitors. Our readership in Africa accounted for 44% of our global audience. The ten cities with the biggest audiences were, in order, Nairobi, Lagos, London, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, Harare, Kampala, Accra, Dar es Salaam, and Sandton. We published around 200 articles. Approximately 84% were by writers of African descent. About 47% were by female authors.

Coverage and Special Series

African Arguments covered a wide spectrum of issues in 2021. We featured stories about vaccine inequity and widespread fights for justice. We examined political shifts from Chad to Zambia and investigated conflicts from Cameroon to Ethiopia. We hosted discussions around kink, culture, and African media coverage, and much more. One of our central focuses was climate change at and around COP26, and African Arguments won an award at Malawi's Green Media Awards.

We ran two special series. "Radical Activism in Africa" was co-guest-edited by Ugandan activist and academic Stella Nyanzi and featured a range of essays by leading writers and activists across the continent. An online panel discussion in collaboration Africa Writes allowed for further exploration of the themes raised. "On Food Security & Covid-19", in partnership with Oxfam, explored the impact the pandemic has had on agriculture, rural communities and land rights across Africa.

Fellowship

African Arguments launched its inaugural Fellowship for Young Freelancers with the support of Africa No Filter. 500 freelance journalists, based on the continent and under the age of 30, applied for the pilot programme. The six most promising candidates were selected as fellows and have undergone a series of specialist trainings. In the first half of 2022, the fellows will write three articles with close support and mentorship from the African Arguments editors.

Debating Ideas

The Debating Ideas sub-section, run independently by the International African Institute (IAI) and sponsored by the World Peace Foundation (WPF), published 118 articles on a broad range of topics, which accounted for about 8% of African Arguments' readership in 2021.

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In 2021, African Arguments received 1.5 million page views and 945,000 unique visitors. Our readership in Africa accounted for 44% of our global audience.

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BUSINESS PROGRAMME

Our business programme offers corporate members exclusive insight into the key economic trends shaping the business environment through our 'Economics to watch' series.

It offers briefings on the latest African issues and gives businesses and policymakers the opportunity to meet with investors operating in the continent.

Economies to Watch:

Sudan

We held a round table discussion on the political situation in Sudan focusing on the political transition, the current economic and business climate and how external factors, especially the risk of growing instability in Ethiopia may affect business investments.

Zambia: The Next Five Years

We partnered with the Zambian High Commission to host an exclusive opportunity to meet H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia who delivered an address on the economic challenges of the Covid pandemic and plans for restoring economic stability and promoting investment opportunities in the next five years.

African Elections and Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 on elections was another focus for the business programme in 2021 as we held briefings on Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya and the Central African Republic to discuss the support needed to strengthen electoral and democratic processes during the pandemic.

The impact of Covid restrictions on African economies

Covid has had a massive impact on Africa and a significant part of that impact has resulted from the closing down of international travel. We examined the consequences of the UK's travel restrictions on African countries and the effects on their economies.

To find out more about the Royal African Society's corporate membership, please visit: royalafriansociety.org/join-us

PUBLIC AND CORPORATE EVENTS

Although 2021 continued to be a difficult year for all, our events programme which moved predominantly online provided some relief from the isolation, offering a valuable space for connection and information sharing.

Despite the constraints on physical events, the public events programme continued to attract large audiences as we celebrated our 120th Anniversary with a number of major events that focused on climate, women, education and African history. We welcomed 3,473 attendees to our public and online events platform, increasing the numbers of attendees from African countries.

Covid, Climate and Democracy

The year started with our flagship event, *Africa in 2021: Covid, Climate, and Democracy*, delivered in partnership with the British Council and the Centre for African Studies, University of Edinburgh. Due to travel restrictions, physical events in London and Edinburgh were cancelled and combined into two online panel sessions with speakers joining us from across the continent in South Africa, Nigeria, Malawi and Ethiopia.

Panel speakers - Dr Nasreen Al-amin, Climate Justice Advocate and founder of Surge Africa, Idayat Hassan, Director, Centre for Democracy and Development, Geetha Tharmaratnam, CEO/Founding Partner, Aequalitas Capital Partners, Jean-Paul Adam - Director, Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management, UNECA, Mohammed Abdulaziz, Medical Epidemiologist, Africa CDC, African Union, Professor Olayinka Olusola Omigbodun, Professor of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan and Chiedza Madzima, Head of Operational Risk Research, Fitch



President Hichilema. Credit: Alex Mayeye

Solutions – gave their insights on how African countries handled the pandemic and its economic impact, how social movements like #EndSARS in Nigeria and pro-democracy campaigners in Malawi continue to change their political systems and how societies responded to the climate crisis.

“

I was encouraged that many of the speakers had first hand experience and were themselves of African origin. [...] This was refreshing and stimulating and made me proud to be African.

Audience member at Africa in 2021

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Climate, Conflict and Demography in Africa Conference

Climate crisis continued to be a major focus for us in 2021 as we hosted our anniversary conference on Climate, Conflict and Demography in Africa, in partnership with the International Crisis Group and Africa Confidential.

The online conference was joined by 1000 participants for interactive panel discussions on the economic consequences of climate and demographic change, the security implications and the international dimensions. It reached conclusions that were communicated to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, underlining the importance of a just climate transition for Africa.

Headline speakers H.E. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, Vice-President of Nigeria and Dr. Kwaku Afriyie Ghana's Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and innovation led the discussions alongside keynote guests including Dr Donald Kaberuka, Co-chair of the UNSG High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and 7th President of the African Development Bank, Ms Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, H.E Hailemariam Desalegn, Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Chair of AGRA and International Crisis Group Trustee, Amb. Johnnie Carson, former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Africa, Ambassador Fred Ngoga Gateretse, Head of the conflict prevention and early warning division at the African Union Commission (AU), and Dr Mo Ibrahim, Founder, Mo Ibrahim Foundation with closing address from Susana Malcorra, Former Argentine Foreign Minister and Board Co-Chair, International Crisis Group.

Annual Lecture

One of the main issues at COP 26 was how to assure a just energy transition for poor and developing

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Conflict and demographics in African countries is a major factor which motivated me to attend.

Conference participant

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countries, including those in Africa, in the face of growing challenges from climate change and economic inequality. The UN was in the centre of the discussions in Glasgow and to mark the Royal African Society's 120th Anniversary, DSG Amina J. Mohammed joined us to deliver a lecture on a just and sustainable energy transition for Africa.

Africa and Britain

Another theme for 2021 was looking at the historical relations between Britain and Africa in a two-part series that focused on the history of the Society and current relations. The Society's Director, Dr. Nicholas Westcott, reflected on what we can learn from the past, what it tells us about how Africa has been seen, understood, and interpreted in Britain, and how perspectives on African realities have been transformed throughout the years by changing political and social relations.

Hon James Duddridge MP, Under-Secretary of State for Africa, joined Dr Monica Juma, Cabinet Secretary for Defence, Government of Kenya and other high level speakers to give their perspective on the impact of Brexit, beneficial economic ties and the importance of asserting the African voice into the world.

POETRY IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM PROGRAMME 2020-2021

Poetry in the Primary Classroom in 2021

The Poetry in the Primary Classroom programme, held in partnership with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Test and Explore Fund, ran from September 2020 to December 2021. Eleven Primary school teachers were enrolled in a Continuing Professional Development and Learning (CPDL) programme to enhance their enjoyment of and practice with poetry from Africa and the diaspora.

Programme Outcomes

The teachers enrolled in the programme found that their confidence in teaching African and diaspora poetry had increased by the end of the training. Additionally, the three poets who ran workshops on the programme (Ruth Awolola, Karl Nova and Amina Jama) felt more confident working with teachers and expanding their own writing for educational purposes. And despite the programme taking place virtually, teachers were still able to test out their learning with their own pupils and explore more representative poetry and literature in a meaningful way. There is also a bank of teaching resources available on our website for any educators interested in teaching African and diaspora poetry going forward.

The Future of the Education Programme

Our aim at the Royal African Society, is to take the learning from this programme and expand our education offer further, including the sharing of resources, focusing on a wider reach of African and diaspora poetry, and connecting more African and diaspora poets with schools and teacher trainers.

“

I have a newly refreshed realisation that there is a huge wealth of literature that I am not familiar with at all, and that it is my responsibility to bring these texts into my classroom – not with a label or as a 'token' text, but as examples of high quality literature that become embedded in the curriculum

Teacher, Poetry in the Primary Classroom

”



Africa Writes BSL interpreters
Credit: Ivan Gonzalez

APPG FOR AFRICA

Parliamentary Outreach

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG for Africa) for Africa continues to drive policy discussions on Africa in Westminster. Building on our report on Visa Problems for African Visitors to the UK, of which **UKVI has implemented some of the recommendations**, such as cutting contact fees, increasing availability of digital applications, and changing guidelines for visa officers and applicants, in 2021 the APPG for Africa has continued to brief MPs and lead discussions on the negative impacts of travel bans and red lists due to Covid-19, which have disproportionately affected African countries. The APPG for Africa has also raised Oral Questions in the House of Commons asking that the UK do more to facilitate the production of Covid-19 vaccines in Africa so that Africans can vaccinate Africans, and we will continue to raise this issue as the pandemic continues.

In October, the APPG for Africa successfully applied for an urgent debate in the House of Commons following the coup in Sudan and APPG for Africa Chair Chi Onwurah led a robust debate on the coup and the UK's policy in the lead up to the coup. The Royal African Society supported the APPG for Africa by working with the spokespeople from the main parties and contributing to the research and speeches in the chamber.

Africa in the UK Curricula

As part of our 120th Anniversary this year, the Royal African Society in partnership with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa and Justice to History undertook a policy inquiry into Africa and its Diaspora in UK School Curricula. The parliamentary committee of inquiry includes a number of experts in the field and is led by Lord Paul Boateng.

The inquiry has gathered a wide and diverse range of information and lived experience via the inquiry survey to which we received over 230 responses, and also via the 33 written submissions and two oral evidence sessions. The evidence sessions are available to view via the RAS Facebook Page. It has drawn up policy recommendations and is in the process of discussing them with the Secretary of State for Education. The report will be released to the public in March 2022.

Widening our engagement

The move to remote meetings has allowed parliamentarians to engage with a wider diversity of individuals and a greater inclusion of people speaking from Africa. 2021 highlights included high-level roundtables on Elections & Covid in Africa, the African Continental Free Trade Area, and Conflict and Climate in Africa. Closer to Westminster, the group hosted the Minister for Africa, FCDO officials and academics from across the UK and Africa.

“

Education on Africa often misrepresents the continent. Africa is a vibrant and interesting continent and we needn't only focus on negative issues, which often only reinforce negative stereotypes. Africa can be studied in its own right rather than just in relation to the West... When we do teach British - African relations, we can also do so in a way that represents Britain's own unique relationship with Africa and Africans.

Bim Afolaimi MP, APPG for Africa Inquiry Committee Member

”

AFRICA WRITES 2021

This year we held our first fully hybrid festival with a month of activities and events running from 4th – 24th October. In-person events happened on 24th September, 4th October and then 23rd–24th October at British Library. The range of activities included workshops for children and young people via our Young Voices platform, panel discussions, creative workshops and live events. The key themes included imagination, activism and pleasure. Throughout the festival, we brought together 74 writers, facilitators and performers from Africa and its Diaspora. Our Partners were Deafest, 180 The Strand, Knights of, Arvon, Kaduna Book & Arts Festival, Afro Queer Podcast, Pa Gya!, Cassava Republic, African Arguments and, of course, British Library. All of the in-person events at British Library were also live-streamed and our booksellers for the weekend at BL were Book Love and Africa Book Centre.

Highlights

The festival officially opened with Julian Knxx's 'In Praise of Still Boys' at 180 The Strand, an evening of intergenerational conversation and an exclusive, pre-opening viewing of the accompanying short film installation. Our headline event was 'Dismantling the Patriarchy: Mona Eltahawy in conversation' moderated by Leyla Hussein which was received really well with a lively turnout.

Lifetime Achievement in African Literature

This year's award, generously sponsored by Penguin Random House, went to Mícere Gĩthae Mũgo, Emerita Meredith Professor for Teaching Excellence, Department of African Studies, Syracuse University (retired since 2015). Mícere has published seven books, eight co-edited supplementary school-readers and five monographs. Born in Baricho, Kenya, Mícere was, reportedly, the first scholar in East Africa to receive a doctorate in Literature and the first woman in Africa to be elected university academic-dean. During the 42 years of her university career, she served in many senior administrative roles and received numerous awards including the Flora Nwapa Award for Writing Excellence; Distinguished Mwalimu Nyerere Award; Distinguished Africanist Award; Nelson Mandela Leadership Award and a myriad of others. A longstanding activist for human rights and social justice, Mícere describes her daughters, Mũmbi wa Mũgo and the late Njeri Kũi Mũgo, as best friends and comrades in the struggle, especially during her years in exile from Kenya (1982–1993), under the dictatorship of former President Daniel arap Moi. She currently lives in Syracuse, New York and remains an ardent community activist.



Africa Writes 2022 will have satellite events in Leeds (March), Swindon (July) and Birmingham (October) in collaboration with the local Literature Festivals.

lydia luke
Credit: Ivan Gonzalez

AFRICA
WRITES
brought to you by the
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HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT 2021

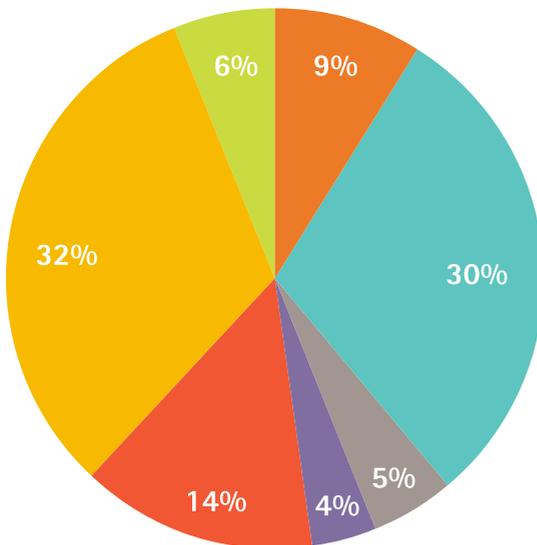
The Society again operated under the many pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic and again produced a creditable financial performance in challenging circumstances for our staff and members, both individual and corporate. Its events were predominantly virtual, which resulted in lower revenue collection. Our journal, African Affairs, remained the largest source of the Society's income although the net revenue from the publication saw a gentle decline in line with the recent trend. Corporate memberships were marginally down on the year but the Society enjoyed a healthy pick-up in grants and donations. Our annual lecture in November was particularly successful. We held direct staff costs broadly flat.

The operating deficit was reduced to £25,000 from £43,000 in 2020. For the third year in succession we benefited from revaluation gains and so were able to report a final surplus in 2021 of £10,000 (deficit of £27,000 the previous year).

The Society maintains a solid cushion of reserves as our buffer against external shocks. While we are alert to the possibility of another round of hits from the pandemic, the buffer has allowed us to approve a budget for 2022 with a little ambition. Early indications point to further robust growth in grants and donations from existing and new partners. Additionally, there will be an ASUK conference this year (in Liverpool in September), which should generate a boost in individual memberships. We hope to organize a special fundraising event this year within the celebrations for the Society's 120th anniversary. We plan to make modest additions to our staff, which will help us broaden our offering for the Society's diverse membership.

Gregory Kronsten
Honorary Treasurer

SOURCES OF INCOME IN 2021



- Public Bodies: 9% (£61,000)
- Trusts & Foundations: 30% (£192,000)
- Corporate membership: 5% (£33,000)
- Individual Membership: 4% (£26,000)
- Corporate & Individual Donations: 14% (£92,000)
- Journal: 32% (£210,000)
- Revenue: 6% (£38,000)

Total Income: £652,000

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

For the year ended 31st December 2021

	2021	2020
	£,000	£,000
Income and Expenditure Account		
Income from:		
Donations	104	44
Charitable activities		
Connect	78	76
Learn	264	267
Debate	105	44
Celebrate	80	70
Other trading activities	12	12
Investment income	8	8
Total income	651	521
Expenditure on:		
Raising Funds	38	34
Charitable activities		
Connect	160	176
Learn	118	78
Debate	230	157
Celebrate	130	119
Total expenditure	677	564
Net operating income/(expenditure)	(25)	(43)
Gain/(loss) on revaluation of investments	35	16
Total net income/(expenditure)	(10)	(27)
Total Funds brought forward	428	456
Total Funds carried forward	438	429
Balance Sheet		
Investments	313	278
Current assets	213	270
Current liabilities	(87)	(119)
Total net assets	438	429

TEAM AND COUNCIL

COUNCIL

Chairperson

Zeinab Badawi (to July 2021)
Arunma Oteh (from July 2021)

Vice-Chairs

Jide Olanrewaju
Dr Titilola Banjoko
Professor Chris Cramer
(to June 2021)

Honorary Treasurer

Innes Meek (to June 2021)
Gregory Kronsten
(from July 2021)

Elected Members

Susana Edjang
Boko Inyundo
Obi James
Nike Jonah
Razia Khan
Joel Kibazo
Anne McCormick
Andrew Skipper
Geetha Tharmaratnam
Professor Adam Habib
Professor Phil Clark

Co-opted Members

Baroness Northover
Miles Wickstead
Ola Uduku (ex officio)
Sotonye Oye-Somefun

Appointed Members

African Affairs Co-Editors
(see below)

TEAM

Director

Dr Nicholas Westcott, CMG

Deputy Director

Desta Haile

Fundraising Manager

Caitlin Pearson (to July 2021)
Sonia Foday (from August
2021)

Administrative Manager

Lizzie Orekoya

Membership Administrator

Melmarie Laccay

Africa APPG for Africa Policy & Advocacy Manager

Hetty Bailey-Morgan
Jack Patterson (filling in for
Hetty on maternity leave)

African Arguments Editor

James Wan

African Arguments Deputy Editor

Ayodeji Rotinwa

Corporate & Public Events Manager

Hoda Dahir

Africa Writes Producer & Project Co-ordinator

Marcelle Mateki Akita

Education & Outreach Programme Manager

Olivia Danso (from September)

Film Africa Producer

Sarah Wechselberger

Marketing & PR Consultants

Beth O'Connor
Nouria Bah

Consultant Accountant

Brian Johnson

RAS Intern

Samia Amoa

African Affairs

Co-Editors

Ricardo Soares de Oliveira
Ambreena Manji
George Bob-Millia
Scott Straus

Book Reviews Editor

Akin Ilwilde

Editorial Assistant

Busani Mpofo

Auditors

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Brighton BN2 9QA

Branding & Design

D237.com

OUR PARTNERS

We partner with companies and organisations that share our values to enhance our events and programmes, reach new audiences and networks, and share resources and expertise. Through our partnerships, we also aim to develop research and insight, amplify ideas or campaigns, and achieve sustainability. We are proud to present a selection of the main partners we have worked with in 2020 below.

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Paul Hamlyn Foundation

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Africa No Filter
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CSIS
Deaffest
Global Press Journal
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THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our members, donors and partners who made our work possible this year, as we move into the 'new normal' together. Your support has helped us make a positive impact across all of our programmes, making Africa the central focus in our business, literary festival, education projects, and other vital initiatives. The opportunities we have had to connect, learn, celebrate and debate a plethora of topics and ideas have only grown despite the unsteady state of the world.

Massive thanks are due to Zeinab Badawi, our Chair of seven years, who so generously gave of her time, expertise and guidance to everyone at the Royal African Society. A warm welcome to our new Chairperson, Arunma Oteh, who we are honoured to have steering us into the future with her incredible international experience and unparalleled work ethic.

The Royal African Society would not be the organisation it is today without the outstanding contribution of Sheila Ruiz, who helped to inspire and guide the Society for an entire decade as Deputy Director, and, prior to that, Head of Programmes, Partnerships and Operations, and Events Manager. Sheila continues to be a fountain of knowledge and support in many areas, for which we are very grateful.

Many thanks are also due to Caitlin Pearson, who as Events and then Fundraising and Partnerships Manager for five years, developed a range of partnerships that have amplified our actions and messages far and wide. Our thanks also to all members of the Africa Writes advisory group – Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, Mireille Harper, Mukoma wa Ngugi, as well as Caitlin – for their insight, advice and assistance in nominating our Lifetime Achievement Award winner Micere Mugo.

Thank you to our Council, SOAS University of London, the ASAUK, editors of African Affairs and its publisher Oxford University Press, and to members of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa, as well as to all our corporate and individual members. Special thanks to our most unwavering and generous partners for their ongoing belief in us: the Miles Morland Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation and the Open Society Foundations.

Our deepest gratitude to our volunteers, interns and friends for their energy, time and enthusiasm and all they do to make our events a success. Our 2021 corporate and public events, the Africa APPG for Africa meetings, our Africa Writes festival, our news and analysis site African Arguments and our Education and Outreach programme – everything we do is delivered in collaboration with a wide range of partners, guest speakers and contributors to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks.





BRITISH COUNCIL
AFRICA WRITES
AFRICAWRITES2021
AFRICA WRITES
AFRICAN COUNCIL USA AND
AFRICA WRITES
AFRICAN COUNCIL USA AND
AFRICA WRITES

Sex Lives of African Women

Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah
Desta Haile

AFRICA WRITES
Brought to you by the
Royal African Society

Deputy Director Desta Haile and writer Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah at Africa Writes
Credit: Ivan Gonzalez



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