

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES



# AFRICAN HUMANITIES PROGRAM

Culminating Report  
December 23, 2023



AHP came as a liberator of the value of research in the humanities and hence resurrecting our hope for the future of our disciplines and our academic prospects...Thanks to AHP, we can now stand among other academics and introduce ourselves with pride that we are scholars or researchers in the humanities.

—*Dina Ligaga F'13*



From 2008-2023, the African Humanities Program (AHP) strengthened the humanities in five African nations—Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda—through a competitive fellowship program funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (“the Corporation”) and administered by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS).

The program offered direct support to early- to mid-career scholars while building an Africa-centered community of reviewers and mentors that would flourish beyond the life of the program. In 2020, this community formally incorporated itself as the African Humanities Association (AHA), which welcomes scholars from across the continent. The AHA held its inaugural conference in 2023.

## I. PROGRAM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

In the early decades of Carnegie Corporation’s work with African universities, support for higher education was focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which were deemed more useful for national development. Early in the new millennium, the Corporation charged ACLS to redress the imbalances created from large investments to STEM disciplines in African universities by “reinvigorating the humanities.” In 2008, the African Humanities Program (AHP) was introduced.

From the start, ACLS sought to center the needs and interests of African scholars, leading many African participants to see AHP as substantially different from other programs in the continent. ACLS engaged 160 university leaders, senior scholars, and emerging scholars in Africa to assess needs in the humanities. From there grew a network of established African scholars who shaped and promoted the program on their home campuses.

The central aim of the AHP fellowship program was to nurture and support early- to mid-career scholars in the humanities through individualized grants for the duration of one year awarded in a peer-reviewed, open, international fellowship competition. AHP also sought to improve collaborations across the humanities in the five selected countries through meetings, workshops, and residencies.

ACLS set out to create “a program to stimulate the production of new knowledge, strengthen the faculty at African universities, and facilitate scholarly communication and lasting interactions across national boundaries.”

### Core program elements

#### RESIDENCIES

AHP offered two- to three-month residencies in universities and research centers to fellows to aid their preparation of book manuscripts and articles. As of 2018, 69 percent of fellows chose to participate in the residency program. The most popular were Rhodes University and the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town, both in South Africa.

#### MANUSCRIPT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS (MDWS)

Instituted in 2012 and perhaps the most popular and influential of all the AHP activities, MDWs were designed as week-long events in one of the five AHP countries.

The workshops sought to make the writing process collaborative by bringing together fellows, reviewers, and key scholars with the goal of developing manuscripts for the African Humanities Series.

### APPLICATION WORKSHOPS

Application Workshops made the program more inclusive and accessible to scholars by offering training in the clear, concise, informative style of writing most effective for crafting competitive grant applications. Beyond assisting applicants, the workshops offered practical experience to future reviewers and mentors.

### REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

Initiated in 2017, these annual assemblies highlighted the development of AHP activities, chronicling past achievements, and planning for the eventual transition to the AHA after the conclusion of Carnegie Corporation’s funding.

ACLS sought to build in a policy of “stepping aside.” Participants were proactively invited to provide feedback so that as a community of humanities scholars grew, ACLS could modify the program according to the needs of African partners, eventually withdrawing from leadership of the program and allowing space for African-designed initiatives—specifically, the African Humanities Association—to take the lead.

## II. IMPACT ON SCHOLARS AND SCHOLARSHIP IN AFRICA

The African Humanities Program was a success by many measures. Scholars in the five AHP countries testify that they were able to publish research and scholarship that they otherwise would have had to abandon due to other responsibilities and pressures. The fellowship increased their authority and standing in institutional and cultural contexts unfriendly to or dismissive of humanistic inquiry. Alumni rose in the ranks of their fields and the administrations of their institutions.

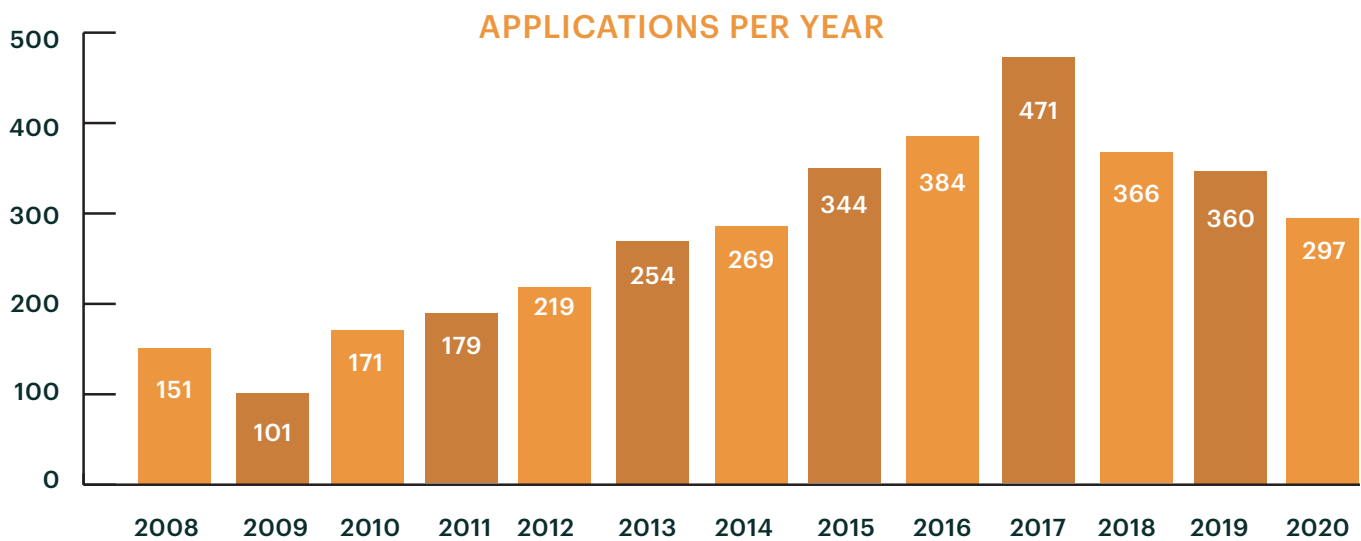
### DISSERTATION AND POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

As of 2022, AHP assessed more than 3,500 applications and awarded 491 fellowships to early and mid-career scholars from more than 70 African universities.

The number of AHP applications steadily increased throughout the life of the program, peaking in 2017 at 471.

Fellows praise important research funds, as well as the crucial gift of time through temporary release from a heavy teaching load.

For those who lacked the technology and resources needed to conduct their work, AHP offered access to computers and other technology. The program also offered events at which fellows and potential fellows gained practical skills that they could employ as mentors at their home universities.



## Publications

The fellowship experience enabled Fellows to publish more prolifically, to publish in high-profile journals, and to publish high-quality, rigorously reviewed monographs through the African Humanities Series and beyond.

## SCHOLARLY JOURNALS

A central goal of AHP was to encourage and enable fellows to publish their work in leading scholarly journals and with reputable presses. AHP met this goal, with work supported by the program appearing in more than 100 peer-reviewed scholarly journals, including AHP-inspired special issues. Prestigious journals in which fellows published work include:

SCHOLARLY JOURNALS	
<i>African Affairs</i>	<i>Journal of International Women's Studies</i>
<i>African Identities</i>	<i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i>
<i>African Studies Review</i>	<i>Journal of Postcolonial Writing</i>
<i>Development Policy Review</i>	<i>Journal of Southern African Studies</i>
<i>English &amp; Linguistics</i>	<i>Journalism</i>
<i>English Today</i>	<i>Language &amp; Communication</i>
<i>European Journal of Cultural Studies</i>	<i>Quarterly Review of Film and Video</i>
<i>International Journal of Heritage Studies</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i>
<i>Journal of African Cultural Studies</i>	<i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i>
<i>Journal of Asian and African Studies</i>	<i>Journalism</i>
<i>Journal of Black Studies</i>	<i>Language &amp; Communication</i>
<i>Journal of Contemporary African Studies</i>	<i>Quarterly Review of Film and Video</i>
<i>Journal of International Migration and Integration</i>	<i>World Archaeology</i>

## AHP SPECIAL EDITION JOURNALS

### ***Humanistic Confluence: Essays from the African Humanities Program (2013)***

*African Notes*, a well-respected journal published since 1964 by the University of Ibadan Institute of African Studies, released a special issue in 2013 entitled *Humanistic Confluence: Essays from the African Humanities Program*. Inspired by the June 2013 AHP Launch Meeting in Ibadan, the special issue included 10 peer-reviewed works by fellows and was circulated widely to libraries, subscribers, and AHP “friends and family.” It served both as a review of articles supported by the program and as a promotional and informational tool for potential applicants.

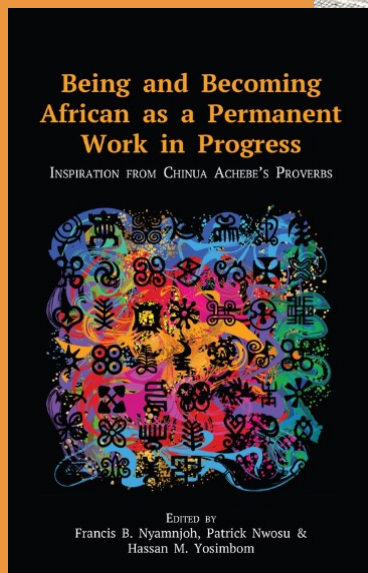
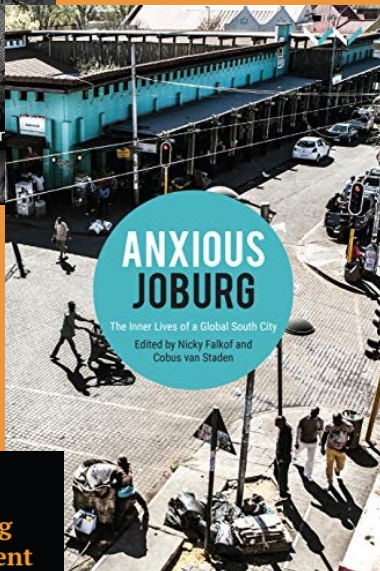
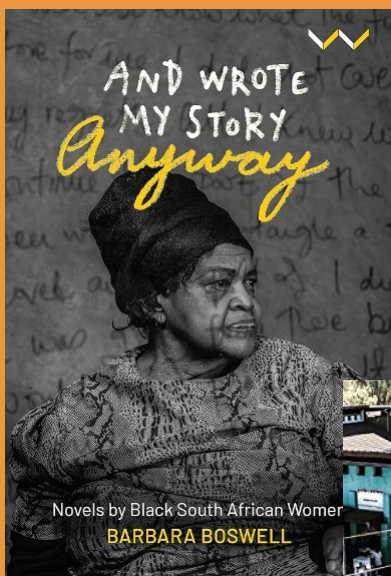
### ***Journal of Contemporary African Studies* Volume 37, 2019 - Issue 1**

The 2019 AHP Regional Assembly held in Dar es Salaam sparked an international debate concerning the “politics of global knowledge production.” AHP Advisor Steven Feierman’s keynote address entitled “Writing History: Flow and Blockages in the Circulation of Knowledge,” reprinted in the journal, spurred an editorial by Fred Hendricks and elicited a debate among African scholars including Frederick J. Kaijage, Oswald Masebo, and Innocent Pikirayi. This discussion, published in a widely circulated journal, illuminated the impact of AHP funding throughout its initial decade.

“If anyone went back to look at a ‘Who’s Who’ of humanities research, you would see that a lot of them were AHP scholars because they had the opportunity... early in their careers, to be able to do research and get themselves established.”

—Andrea Johnson, Former Program Officer,  
Higher Education And Research In Africa,  
Carnegie Corporation of New York





## BOOK PUBLICATIONS & CHAPTERS IN EDITED COLLECTIONS

AHP fellows have also published widely as authors and editors of books and as contributors to edited collections by world-renowned scholarly presses such as Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, and Wiley. Fellows' writings have also been published in leading African presses such as Jacana Media, Langaa RPCIG, and Wits University Press.

## BOOKS

Anna-Marie de Beer, *Sharing the Burden of Stories from the Tutsi Genocide*, Springer International Publishing, 2020.

Barbara Boswell, *And Wrote My Story Anyway: Black South African Women's Novels as Feminism*, Wits University Press, 2020.

Sule E. Egya, *Nature, Environment, and Activism in Nigerian Literature*, Taylor & Francis, 2020.

## EDITED VOLUMES

Darren Newbury, Kylie Thomas, and Lorena Rizzo, eds., *Women and Photography in Africa: Creative Practices and Feminist Challenges*, Routledge, 2021.

Cobus van Staden and Nicky Falkof, eds., *Anxious Joburg: The Inner Lives of a Global South City*, Wits University Press, 2020.

Grace Musila, *Routledge Handbook of African Popular Culture*, Routledge, 2022.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

Asante Mtenje, "Insulting the modesty of a woman?! Examining the language of protest in Malawi," in *Subaltern Women's Narratives*, Routledge, 2020.

Eyo Mensah, "Authenticity and the Object of Study: Methods of Youth Language Data Collection," in *Youth Language Practices and Urban Language Contact in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Joseph Oduro-Frimpong, "The Pleasure(s) of Proverb Discourse in Contemporary Popular Ghanaian Music: The Case of Obrafour's Hiplife Songs," in *Being and Becoming African as a Permanent Work in Progress*, Langaa RPCIG, 2021.

## THE AFRICAN HUMANITIES SERIES

Two years into the program, in 2010, the African Humanities Series (AHS) was launched with the goal of publishing manuscripts by postdoctoral fellows. Since then, it has successfully published the research of 22 AHP Fellows, and our analysis of Google Scholar citation tracking indicates these books are being read by leading scholars in Africa. The Manuscript Development Workshops, tied directly to the AHS, enhanced the quality of publications through focused developmental editing.

Year Published	BOOK TITLE	Author	Total Citations (as of August 2023)
2011	<i>Parading Respectability: The cultural and moral aesthetics of the Christmas Bands Movement in the Western Cape, South Africa</i>	Sylvia Bruinders, F'12	21
2016	<i>Claude E. Ake: The Making of an Organic Intellectual</i>	Jeremiah Arowosegbe, F'09	4
2016	<i>White Narratives: The Depiction of post-2000 Land Invasions in Zimbabwe</i>	Irikidzayi Manase, F'10	24
2017	<i>Indigenous Shona Philosophy: Reconstructive Insights</i>	Pascah Mungwini, F'11	26
2018	<i>Consensus as Democracy in Africa</i>	Bernard Matolino, F'12	19
2018	<i>Language and the Construction of Multiple Identities in the Nigerian Novel</i>	Romanus Aboh, F'14	12
2018	<i>The Anglophone Literary-Linguistic Continuum: English and Indigenous Languages in African Literary Discourse</i>	Michael Andindilile, F'10	5
2018	<i>Unshared Identity: Posthumous Paternity in a Contemporary Yoruba Community</i>	Babajide Ololajulo, F'14	3
2019	<i>Boxing is no Cakewalk: Azumah 'Ring Professor' Nelson in the Social History of Ghanaian Boxing</i>	De-Valera NYM Botchway, F'13	3
2019	<i>Gender Terrains in African Cinema</i>	Dominica Dipio, F'09	21
2019	<i>Nation, Power and Dissidence in Third Generation Nigerian Poetry in English</i>	Sule E. Egya, F'11	18
2019	<i>What the Forest Told Me: Yoruba Hunter, Culture and Narrative Performance</i>	Ayo Adeduntan, F'09	15
2020	<i>African Personhood and Applied Ethics</i>	Motsamai Molefe, F'18	13
2020	<i>Hollywood and Africa: Recycling the 'Dark Continent' Myth from 1908-2020</i>	Okaka Opio Dokotum, F'10	18





Okaka Opio Dokotum F'10 (right) sharing his African Humanities Series publication with Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka at the 2020 AHP Regional Assembly in Nigeria.

Year Published	BOOK TITLE	Author	Total Citations (as of August 2023)
2020	<i>Women, Visibility and Morality in Kenyan Popular Media</i>	Dina Ligaga, F'13	26
2022	<i>Yabbing and Wording: The Artistry of Nigerian Stand-up Comedy</i>	Izue Nwankwo, F'11, F'14	4
2022	<i>Men Across Time: Contesting Masculinities in Ghanaian Fiction and Film</i>	Theresah Patrine Ennin, F'15	None Recorded
2022	<i>Music and Urban Youth Identities: A Study of Ghetto Youth in Contemporary Culture and Politics in Zimbabwe</i>	Doreen R. Tivenga, F'20	None Recorded
2022	<i>Politics, Profits, and Protection: Zimbabwe's Tobacco Industry since 1947</i>	Sibanengi Ncube, F'20	None Recorded
2022	<i>Queer Bodies in African Films</i>	Gibson Ncube, F'16	None Recorded
2023	<i>Beyond Monuments: The Politics and Poetics of Memory in post-War Northern Uganda</i>	Laury L. Ocen, F'16, F'18	None Recorded
2023	<i>Bettering their Foods: Peasant production, nutrition and the state in Malawi, 1859–2005</i>	Bryson G. Nkhoma, F'21	None Recorded

## Additional professional achievements

### AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIP

This award, made possible by AHP and the African Studies Association (ASA), a US-based association of African Studies scholars, was a feature of the program for ten years. It allowed former fellows to present their work at the annual ASA conference. It also provided opportunities for African-based scholars to visit American colleges and universities and to build relationships with fellow Africanists and explore opportunities for collaborative ventures. The fellowship started with one award and was expanded to four in 2015.

**“The fellowship expanded my networks beyond Africa and boosted my confidence. I met some US based Africanist scholars who became interested in my project and shared opportunities of interest. I also had a short but fruitful residency at Rutgers University where I delivered a guest lecture and interacted with students and Africanist colleagues. This was a turning of seasons in my career!”**

—Gbemisola Aderemi Adeoti F’09

#### 2010

**Dominic Dipio**, Makerere University, Uganda

#### 2011

**Leketi Makalela**, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

**Susan Nalugwa Kiguli**, Makerere University, Uganda

#### 2012

**Gbemisola Adeoti**, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

**Jemima Asabea Anderson**, University of Ghana, Legon

**Amidou Jean-Baptiste Sourou**, Saint Augustine University of Tanzania

#### 2013

**Komlan Agbedahin**, Rhodes University, South Africa

**Mathayo Bernard Ndomondo**, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**Stella Nyanzi**, Makerere University, Uganda

#### 2014

**Joanna Boampong**, University of Ghana, Legon

**Grace Ahingula Musila**, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

**Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale**, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

#### 2015

**Abubakar Aliyu Liman**, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria

**Sylvia Bruinders**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**Joseph Oduro-Frimpong**, Ashesi University College, Ghana

**Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh**, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria

## OTHER ACADEMIC AWARDS

Fellows were able to leverage the AHP experience to secure additional academic awards, including fellowships and grants from from Carnegie Corporation of New York, Fulbright, and the Social Science Research Council. Notably, Okaka Opio Dokotum received a Senior Fulbright African Research Scholar award for the 2014-2015 academic year and Angelo Kakande was appointed Fulbright Professor at Illinois State University for the 2018-2019 academic year.

**“I gained enough confidence to write a proposal that won a grant worth \$32,720 from Carnegie Corporation of New York. I also competed for a \$5,000,000 research grant funded by the Canadian Government and the National Research Fund of South Africa.**

**Even though I did not win this one, I was happy that the Residency and MDW enabled me to gain enough confidence to write a big grant proposal and that I managed to stay in the competition up to the final round.”**

**—Angelo Kakande F'12**

## 2016

**Nomusa Makhubu**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**Okechukwu Charles Nwafor**, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria

**Eric Debrah Otchere**, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

**Evassy Amanda Tumusiime**, Makerere University, Uganda

## 2017

**Dina Adhiambo Ligaga**, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

**Aaron Mushengyezi**, Makerere University, Uganda

**Ngusekela Mona Mwakalinga**, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso**, Babcock University, Nigeria

## 2018

**Theresah Patrine Ennin**, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

**Zintombizethu Matebeni**, University of Cape Town, South Africa

**James Ocita**, Makerere University, Uganda

**Samaila Suleiman**, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

## 2019

**Austin Emielu**, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

**Bernard Matolino**, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

**Babajide Ololajulo**, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Susana Molins-Llitas**, University of Cape Town, South Africa



## LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

A number of AHP fellows rose to high positions in their universities—especially noteworthy in a period when university leadership tends to cluster in the STEM and business faculties.

One fellow was promoted as deputy principal at the newly established College of Humanities at the University of Dar es Salaam. “Since then,” the fellow observes, “I have been the Head of the Department of Creative Arts, Director of the Directorate of Public Services, and currently the Dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Without a doubt, I credit the AHP for these achievements.”

Other promotions of former fellows attributed to AHP include:

- Dr. Mariam Laraba Birma was appointed undergraduate dean in the Faculty of Arts at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria.
- Dr. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo was promoted to Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs at the University of Ghana.
- Dr. Elizabeth Kyazike is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Kyambogo University, Uganda.

“From my rich experience of the AHP, I have grown from strength to strength. I became a Faculty Dean in 2018 and felt honored to attend the 2020 Regional Assembly in Abuja. Coming from Kyambogo University with a modest number of Fellows relative to Makerere University, I appreciate the opportunity to have my voice included as part of the AHP Dialogues and to operate as an AHP advocate.”

—Elizabeth Kyazike F’12, F’14

## African humanities community

### AFRICAN HUMANITIES BY AND FOR AFRICANS

In Africa, foundational or basic research in the humanities has a distinctive resonance. The study of history, philosophy, languages, religion, and the arts has been distorted by centuries of European and North American influence. Only in recent years have African scholars begun to redress the damage done by bias and prejudice and to recover history, culture, and languages in ways that contribute to national and regional self-understanding—the knowledge on which robust democracy and transnational security are built.

AHP lifted up intellectual interventions conceived in Africa, after years of heavy reliance on and debate over western paradigms. A new cohort of thinkers has emerged, whose work is generated within and for African contexts.

AHP brought the humanities to the forefront of public debates and highlighted their relevance to current problems, interests, and policies.

### FOSTERING A NETWORK OF AFRICAN SCHOLARS

Fostering relationship building among Africa scholars was one of the main goals of AHP. The integration of mentoring throughout AHP activities, pairing established scholars with fellows as well as peer-to-peer mentoring, helped to build and strengthen this network. The creation of various train-the-trainer events, particularly writing workshops, also enabled fellows to acquire practical skills that they could employ as mentors at their home universities.

By grounding AHP in local relationships, ACLS empowered African scholars to take leadership roles in the program, instead of relying on Africanists located in American universities. AHP residencies, regional assemblies, and workshops enabled fellows to meet intellectual peers, collaborate, and learn about scholarly developments outside their own national borders.

**“My recent edited volume, *Routledge Handbook of African Popular Culture*, includes six chapters authored by members of the AHP community, while a special issue of the *Journal of the African Literature Association* I am currently co-editing, includes three essays from AHP community colleagues. I treasure these flows of ideas and opportunities for what they allow us to do, in terms of inserting Africa-based scholarship onto the global African studies canvas, which has historically prioritized Africanist scholarship produced outside Africa.”**

—Grace Musila F’10

### III. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

AHP's large network of mentors, assessors, and reviewers now constitutes a vibrant community of scholars poised to surpass past achievements.

#### FUNDING MODELS

The success of AHP demonstrates the value of external funding in stimulating high-quality scholarship. Funding individual scholars translated into quantitative and qualitative improvement in scholarly production, with an increase in peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and scholarly books being published in well-regarded presses and journals. The funding also provides a lesson on the transformation of African institutions. Even as universities worldwide have gradually devalued and defunded the study of history, philosophy, and culture, as AHP fellows have risen in the ranks at their home institutions, the humanities have gained prominence in Africa.

Continuing a channel of funding for individual scholars will be essential for continued growth of this important scholarly community and continued momentum of the growing influence of humanistic faculty and fields on campuses across the continent. With the conclusion of AHP competitions, scholars will once again return to a reliance on a "culture of contracts," where low pay by home institutions drives many scholars across the continent to supplement their income with paid research for international organizations and business entities. To ensure the flow of scholarship from this new community, it is imperative to establish new fellowship programs.

The practice of delivering grant payments directly to fellows, as opposed to large block grants to institutions, represents a major success and a model for the future. The independent nature of the selection process and the administration of the grants (directly to the scholars, not through the universities) provides a degree of freedom from any given university's financial constraints or staffing needs.

Many fellows have commented on the advantage of AHP's distribution of funding to individuals as a curb on the use of funds for institutional needs and interests.

#### QUALITY FEEDBACK AND SUPPORTS FOR SCHOLARS

From applicant, to fellow, to peer-reviewer, the journey through the competition process can serve as a model for future replication.

The AHP application was considered a "self-teaching manual" for scholars looking to articulate their findings and explain the value of their scholarship. The practice of sharing comments from reviewers helped all applicants improve their scholarship. Additionally, by cultivating scholars who could function as reviewers after completing their fellowships, AHP's African-based peer review built more confidence in fellow African scholars.

The AHP experience shows future funders that African scholars desire additional training in technical and scholarly writing and editing, including logical flow, structural coherence, and literature review, among others. While the program enabled the publication of monographs and offered a template fellows could use for life, similar support might also be directed toward publishing peer-reviewed articles in prestigious scholarly journals. This would both benefit global scholarship and enhance the exposure that fellows receive through the program.

#### ACCESS TO RESOURCES: LIBRARIES, SUBSCRIPTIONS, ARCHIVES, TRAVEL FUNDS

Many of the primary sources necessary for African humanistic inquiry are not housed on the continent. In addition, African scholars also lack access to digitized scholarly collections: Most scholars have access to about 80 percent of what is available at American and European universities. African universities lack library staff dedicated to informing scholars of source availability as well as the centralized, web-based search-functionality common in most Western institutions.

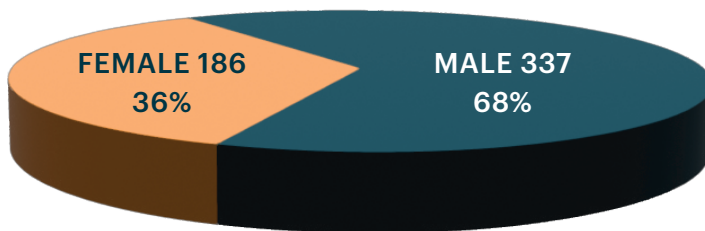
Future funders should consider support for

- travel grants;
- sponsored access to digital resources;
- a review of primary source repositories and databases;

- intensive research training;
- library database management; and
- open-access resources.

## SUPPORT FOR FEMALE SCHOLARS

The percentage of women applicants who won AHP fellowships was comparable to the number of male applicants who did, but the overall number of women is low. This is due in large part to the low numbers of female academics: to take one nation’s example, there are only a handful of women in all northern Nigerian universities combined.



AHP could have taken more aggressive steps to ensure gender as well as disciplinary and regional inclusiveness. The AHA should seek innovative ways to encourage more women to apply for support. These include:

- offering application writing workshops designed for women only;
- broadcasting interviews of successful female fellows on relevant platforms; and
- undertaking a survey of female faculty to identify the obstacles to applying.

## SUPPORT FOR PRESERVATION AND ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

As one scholar concisely captures a point frequently made: “African cultures are oral cultures.” Oral traditions are very strong across the five participating AHP countries and are thus central to humanistic inquiry. With its emphasis on analysis and interpretation, AHP did not adequately acknowledge this element of African humanistic study, and it fell short in its support of the study of languages, cultural practices, religious rituals, and local customs: some fellowship applications were denied because they centered on preservation.

Future program design must adopt an Africa-centered approach. Increased interest around the world in preserving primary sources and oral culture should lead the way. These projects are vital to global cultural preservation and the identities of the nations and ethnicities involved. Logging and documenting oral histories in a centralized database should be a priority for future funders who wish to assist future generations of humanities scholars and the vibrant cultures those scholars seek to serve.

## RESIDENCIES

The benefits of residencies are clear: Experiences away from home also provided immersion “in a different academic culture” and allow fellows to develop relationships that lead to scholarly collaborations, conferences, and more. Future residency programs should look to the centers established by ACLS and African administrators during AHP. Programs could also include centers of African Studies in the US and Europe, where fellows would have access to sources unavailable in Africa.

## DEEPER CONNECTIONS WITH THE US AFRICAN STUDIES COMMUNITY

Learning from AHP’s successful collaboration with the African Studies Association through the ASA Presidential Fellows, ACLS consultations with scholars at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have revealed a strong desire among Black faculty to build connections with scholars in Africa. This desire is echoed by AHP participants. According to Aili Tripp, Wangari Maathai Professor of Political Science and Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, African diaspora scholars in the US welcome the opportunity to provide mentorship to African scholars.



## PUBLICLY CENTERED AND APPLIED SCHOLARSHIP

Fellows and administrators alike call for humanities scholars in Africa (and in the United States) to improve how they describe their scholarly interventions' contribution to solving societal problems. Scholars of the humanities must engage with government, policy makers, and the public to convince them of “the indispensability of humanities disciplines in human progress.”

Humanistic study is key to generating solutions to the so-called wicked problems of our time: behavioral, sociocultural, political, environmental, and technological.

Humanities disciplines play a valuable role in analyzing, codifying, and protecting a nation's cultural heritage, which is vital for burgeoning democracies such as those that were part of the program. Future initiatives should ensure space and value for this directly applied scholarship are included in the remit of fellowship programs and review.

## CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION WITH AHA AND OTHER NETWORKS

The process of bolstering the humanities in Africa is not complete: AHP “is not leaving the field as self-sustaining but one that is still trying to stand.”

As one fellow notes, “While the legacies of the program in terms of the benefits, structures, and the capacities that it generated mean that the intervention achieved its stipulated objectives and set basic research in the humanities on a relatively better stead, the sheer magnitude of the neglect and marginalization to which the humanities had been subjected means that further interventions are still necessary.... Humanities training and scholarship in Africa are still in urgent need of support if it is to continue sustaining the gains made under the AHP.”

Future initiatives and support strategies should consult and collaborate with the AHA, which already seeks to build upon the work of the AHP. As its Strategic Plan states: “the time has come for a new initiative, driven by the circumstances and needs of African scholars and locally designed to extend the transformative impact of the AHP on the continent.”



Under the leadership of Nana Aba Appiah Amfo F'09, the AHA released a series of communications with prescriptions for further support of the humanities in Africa. "Encourage excellence in humanities research and its relevance to intellectual and societal development in Africa." This goal expands the vision of AHP, which concentrated on basic research, acknowledging that addressing the social problems of the continent must be informed by a profound self-understanding inspired by the study of the histories and cultures of African societies."

AHA is expanding to include the arts and social sciences as it sees "a future in Africa of confident, self-referring communities of Humanities, Social Science and Arts scholars who enjoy the respect of peers in other disciplines and in the wider society through their engagement with multifarious challenges facing the continent."

The book series, now published by Routledge, has been opened to include non-AHP scholars for the first time. This has also led to a relationship with the South African National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

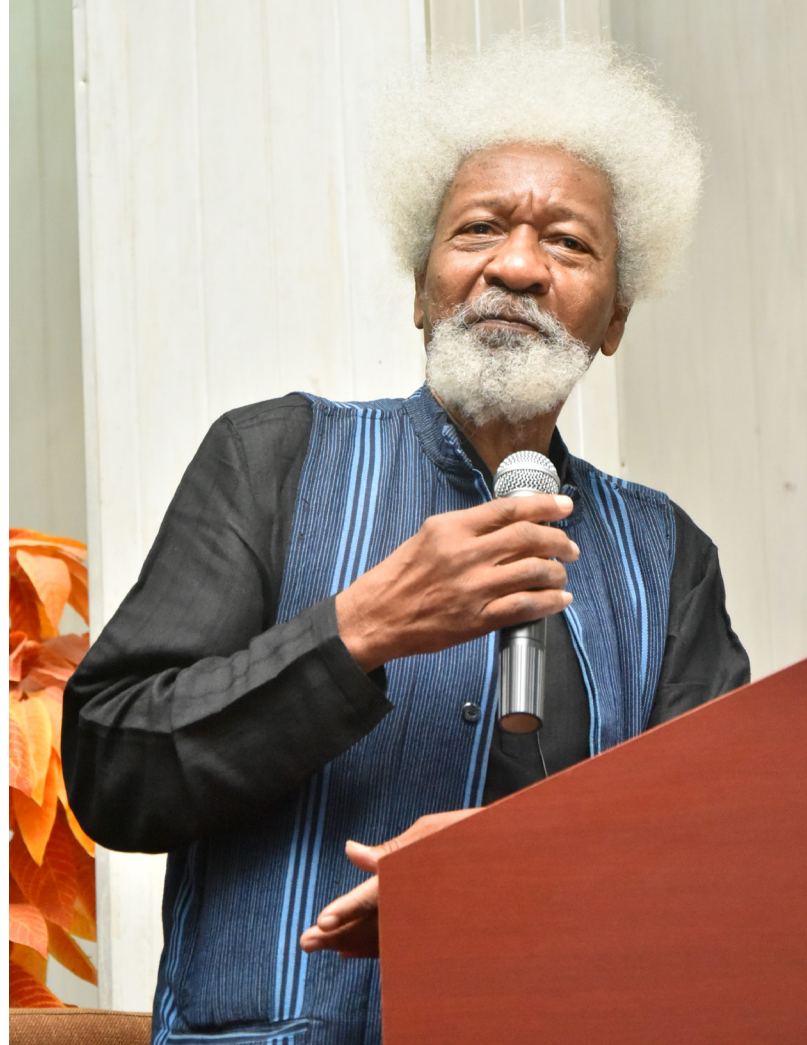


## IV. CONCLUSION

The AHP was successful in supporting individual scholars conducting basic research and fostering networking opportunities and mentoring, as well as providing the platform for the emergence of the AHA. But African humanists desire a more inclusive version of African humanities than have been on offer in the past under the auspices of funding organizations based outside the continent.

For the duration of the AHP, discussion and debates between scholars of different disciplines, regions, and countries—say between a Senegalese scholar of literature and a Ghanaian historian over the relative impact of French and British colonialism—never took place. Uncomfortable arguments in Arabic, Swahili, or other African languages over what would constitute “the most African” approach to literary critique were never hashed out. The focus on “basic qualitative” research rather than “applied” research meant that socially conscious and policy-relevant projects often went unsupported. These examples of paths not taken illuminate the opportunities awaiting scholars in the humanities in Africa.

As Wole Soyinka pointed out in his 2020 AHP keynote address, with regard to “the European humanities,” such as history, sociology, languages, literature, culture, and philosophy, “so many of these theories have to be re-examined on the terms of our experience.” He argued that humanistic inquiry in Africa should focus on “our own history, our developmental experiences, and also the vision that we envisage, that we feel is basic just entitlement after centuries of disdain.” He calls for a socially conscious, inclusive humanities centered on scholarly debate across country, culture, and field of inquiry. Citing the Yoruba proverb that “it takes more than one route to enter a marketplace,” Soyinka urged all to “go haggling in that traditional but timeless space of exchange, the marketplace of African humanities.” Future funders will do well to heed his call.



**“The humanities remain the vector of ideas and the African Humanities are no exception. They constitute the battleground of the mind, and the mind also happens to be where the contest for salvation or damnation is waged.”**

—Wole Soyinka, Keynote Address, AHP Regional Assembly in Abuja, Nigeria (2020)



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