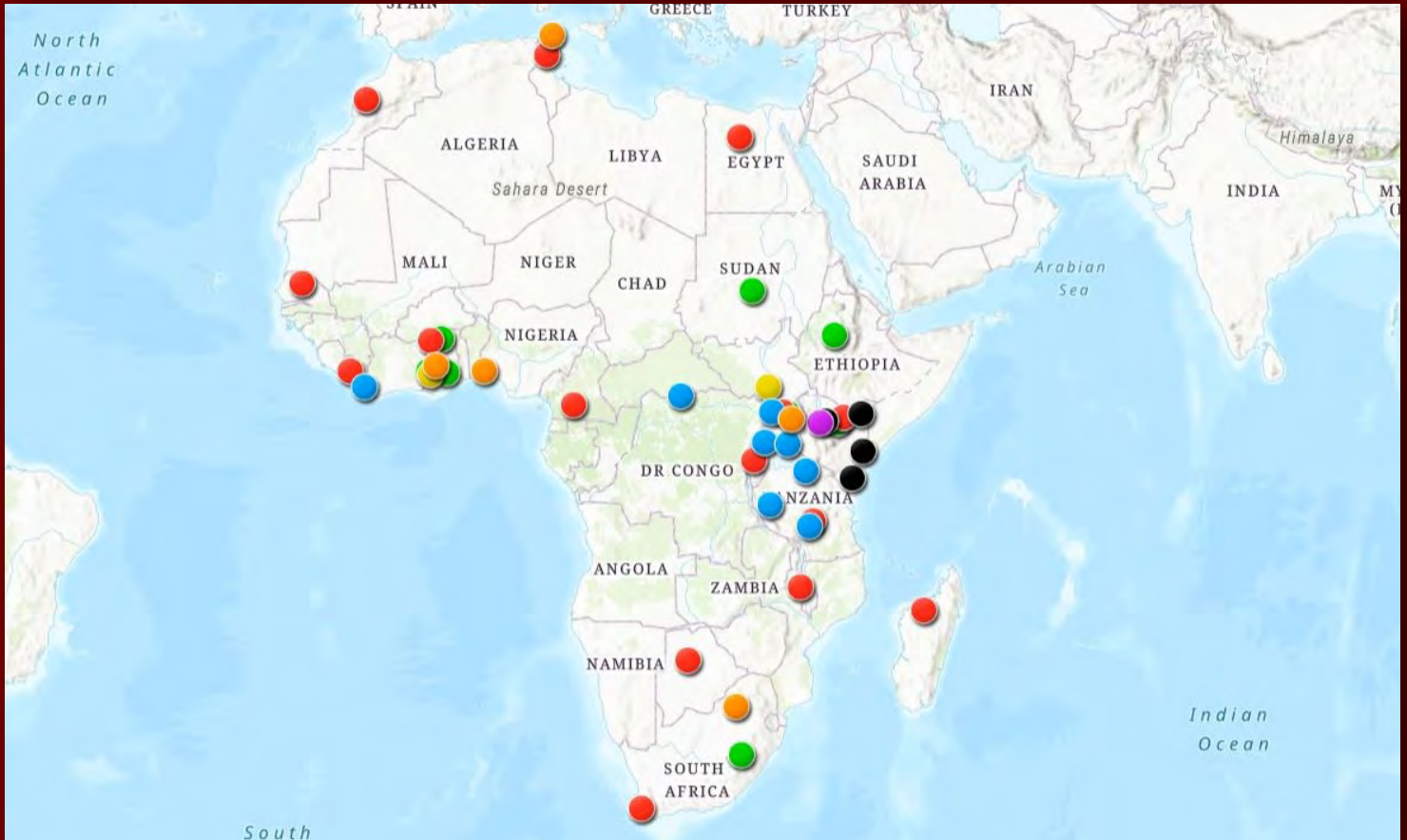
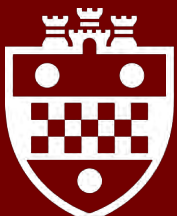


# AFRICAN STUDIES PROGRAM



*Creating, Cultivating, and Continuing  
Connections*

**2019~2020 Annual Report**



University of  
**Pittsburgh**

**African Studies Program**  
University Center for International Studies





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# Message from the Associate Director



I am pleased to share with you our 2019-2020 Annual Report of the African Studies Program (ASP). It was a very challenging year for everyone with the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in our daily activities. In the face of this pandemic, we needed to cancel many events, activities, and travel for many students planning on participating in study abroad and field based experiential learning and internships. Instead of these in-person activities and travel plans, we worked hard to plan meaningful virtual programming for our students to continue their study of Africa. We were still able to realize some notable achievements that we share in this report.

I can say with certainty that this crisis caused by the pandemic has stimulated our thinking about alternative ways of carrying on with our work to help broaden knowledge and understanding of Africa, African experiences, and perspectives. We successfully switched to the remote posture

for most of our program activities to the fullest extent possible. We continued to offer a platform for students, scholars, and academics to engage in conversations around important topics. We believe strongly that these conversations not only helped to shape the perception of Africa at The University of Pittsburgh, but they also shaped the way Africa is viewed in the global context. For example, we have continued with our “Let’s Talk Africa Series” with focused conversations on the impact of COVID-19 on everyday lives of people in Africa including discussion on the impact on education and health. These conversations have been very productive with many people joining, including people on the ground in Africa to share their stories and experiences.

Despite the many challenges of COVID-19, we have had a relatively successful year in fulfilling our mission to broaden knowledge about Africa and bring African perspectives into the scholarship of the Pitt community. I am grateful for all our supporters and thank you for your commitment to our mission and your generosity in giving to African Studies to support our efforts. We are currently in the process of establishing the Joseph K. Adjaye Endowed Student Resource Fund in honor of his enormous contribution to African Studies at Pitt. Professor Joseph Adjaye, who was the founding director of African Studies passed away in June 2019. We hope you will join us in the effort to continue his legacy and passion for teaching about Africa and leading groups of students and educators on group projects abroad to Africa. We have featured Joseph’s story in this annual report, and we will be reaching out to all our networks to ask for your support.

Thanks to the African Studies staff team that worked hard in making the success shared in this report possible. Many thanks to all faculty affiliated to African Studies for your commitment to a strong record of educational activities that enhance our intellectual portfolio and community engagement. We are proud to continue serving as the premier platform for African studies at Pitt and remain committed to broadening knowledge about Africa. I hope you will enjoy reading our annual report and learning about all that we do to enhance knowledge and study of Africa!

Sincerely,

Dr. Macrina C. Lelei



# Meet our Team

## Dr. Anna-Maria Karnes Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor



Anna-Maria Karnes is the Advisor for graduate and undergraduate students in the African Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh. Additionally, as the Community Engagement Coordinator, she finds ways to share knowledge and cultural understanding about Africa with communities and schools in the tri-state area and connects them with people from the African continent.

Born in Cameroon, Karnes has had a love for Africa her entire life. She has had the opportunity to travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. Anna-Maria has a deep-rooted passion for education. Prior to joining Pitt, she taught English as a Second and Foreign language at the university of K-12 levels for 9 years. Texas, Mexico, Turkey, Ethiopia, and Pennsylvania are some the places she has taught. Karnes received her PhD from the University of Pittsburgh School of Education in 2019 where she focused on women and higher education in Ethiopia.

In her role at Pitt she has had the opportunity to take students and teachers abroad to Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Anna-Maria loves engaging with student and learning about their passions and career goals as well as encouraging students to travel to Africa on study abroad trips. Her door is always open to anyone who would like to stop by and share their African experiences or to discuss opportunities.

## Drew Medvid Administrative Assistant



We welcomed Drew to the African Studies Team over the summer and are so excited for him join us!

Drew is the Administrative Assistant for the African Studies Program. Previously, he served as the Office Assistant for the University Center for International Studies. Drew recently graduated from Pitt with a BA in History and Political Science. During his undergraduate career, he studied abroad in South Africa. He is excited to engage with students, to help them discover and grow their passions related to Africa, and to help coordinate and participate in all of the wonderful events and programs ASP has planned this year!

# Meet our Team

## Ashley Saxe Graduate Fellow



Ashley graduated this year as a Doctor of Physical Therapy student from the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at Pitt. Ashley is passionate about connecting students with African Studies and is committed to helping them find creative ways to study Africa within the context of their majors. She guides and encourages students to become more involved with the many learning opportunities available to them as they pursue their interests and passions related to Africa. She is excited to grow the East Africa

Field Based Research and Internship Program in Uganda to allow students to have experience working in the field to apply their classroom knowledge!

Ashley received her undergraduate degree from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences with a certificate in African Studies. She has traveled to Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Uganda. She is a passionate Africanist, and because of her travels she now has connections and resources across the entire continent. She continues to be an asset to the program.

## Mercy Jemita Graduate Fellow



Mercy Jematia is the winner of the 2019-2020 Heinz Fellowship. She began her studies in Administrative and Policy Studies Program in Pitt's School of Education this fall. Born and raised in a small rural village in Mosoriat, Western Kenya, Mercy has always enjoyed teaching languages and culture. She graduated in December 2017 from Kibabii University, Bungoma County, Kenya, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education for Swahili. She completed her teaching practice in Chebisaas Boys School in Eldoret, and is a trained Swahili Instructor.

Mercy is interested in Kenyan education policy and her emphasis is to understand the role of that language in literacy development. She is interested in understanding diverse early childhood education programs that bring together the social, emotional and cognitive domains. She appreciates different cultures and looks forward to learning from the University community and sharing her own culture, ideas, and interests.

# Meet our Team

Abena Ampofo



## Undergraduate Student Ambassador

Abena graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Africana Studies, minors in Sociology and Chemistry, and with a certificate in African Studies. She found her way to the program during her freshman year. Since then, she has studied abroad in Iringa, Tanzania and served as a Student Ambassador with the African Studies Program for 2 years. In addition to her duties as a Student Ambassador, Abena works as a Psychiatric Research Assistant at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. She also mentors international students through her dual role as both a Global Ties Mentor

and Pitt to You Ambassador. She often jokes that a full plate keeps her sane and out of trouble. Abena was awarded a prestigious Boren Scholarship to study Swahili next year, you can read more about her award on page 21.

Pelumi Olubenga  
GSPIA Fellow



Pelumi Olubenga was born and raised in Nigeria. He graduated with his Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and International Studies from the Lagos State University, Ojo; in Nigeria - where he was awarded the Vice Chancellor's/ President's Certificate of Honour for Exceptional Leadership on the G.N.S Review Committee. Pelumi is currently a Master of International Development student at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). His Master's degree Major is in Energy and Environment while his Minor will be in Cybersecurity, Policy and Law. Pelumi is also enrolled in the Graduate Certificate of the African Studies Program here at the University of Pittsburgh. Pelumi over the past three years has served as a

mentor to young civic leaders in University campuses across Africa and beyond. He has been selected to participate in global youth programs at the World Bank Group, the United Nations, and the Commonwealth People's Forum. On Africa's development, Pelumi believes that the continent and its people must optimally harness its own natural resources and human capital to sustainably address its core development challenges .



# Meet our Team

Emmanuel Ampofo  
Undergraduate Work Study



Emmanuel was born in Ghana, West Africa but lives in Bucks County, PA. Although an undeclared sophomore on the Pharmacy track, he demonstrates his love for the sciences, especially in Chemistry. During his freshman year, he served as a work-study intern where he learned a lot of transferrable skills. He is currently an undergraduate fellow and loves to share interests and speak about his home continent of Africa. Alongside being a fellow, Emmanuel is a RISE secretary and a Provost Academy Leader where he mentors first year students. Emmanuel is very passionate about showing the world that Africa has very gifted minds which will prevail given fair circumstances. He hopes to attend Pharmacy school next year.

Sharonda Watson  
UCIS Student Engagement Intern



Sharonda Watson was born and raised in Columbus, GA and earned a bachelor's degree in History and International Affairs at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, GA. She is a recipient of the Benjamin A. Gilman and Freeman Asia Scholarship to study abroad in South Korea. Before coming to Pitt, she interned at UNITAR where she researched how businesses could implement environmental sustainability. She was also selected as a 2018-19 Gilman Alumni Ambassador where she helped undergraduate students with their applications or provides testimony on her experience abroad. She is currently obtaining a Master of International and Public Affairs at Pitt studying Human Security while obtaining a Graduate Certificate in Asian Studies. At Pitt, she hopes to inspire more students to study abroad and diversify their international interests.

# Meet our Team

Kennedy Barasa

2019~20 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA)



Kennedy is a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant for Swahili with a Bachelors Degree in English and Literature from the Kibabii University. He is passionate about mutual coexistence among people and strives to make that appreciated through sharing his Kenyan culture with American students both at the University of Pittsburgh and other lower learning institutions. Kennedy is not just a Swahili Cultural Ambassador; he is also an interested learner of the culture that shapes the American social space.

He believes that learning about and appreciating other people's cultures is a critical ingredient in the global goal of forging a more coherent, just, and inclusive society.

## Classroom Outreach



A major part of the FLTA's role in African Studies is to visit K-12 and college classrooms to share knowledge about Africa. This year, Kennedy visited several area middle schools, high schools, and a community college. Through his visits, hundreds of students were able to learn more about the history and culture of East Africa, the region Kennedy is from. We love being able to reach our community to enhance their knowledge and understanding of Africa through our FLTA!

The Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The program is designed to develop Americans' knowledge of foreign cultures and languages by supporting teaching assistantships in over 30 languages at hundreds of U.S. institutions of higher education.



# Certificate in African Studies

This year, 11 students (3 graduates and 8 undergraduates) earned the African Studies Certificate. In this report, we share their interests in Africa, unique experiences in the program, their hopes and aspirations upon graduation. We are incredibly proud of them for their achievements.



This year we celebrated our graduates virtually, above is a our Graduation Recognition Ceremony Zoom style! **Top Row, Left to Right:** Macrina Lelei, Associate Director; Ashley Saxe, Graduate Fellow, Jessi Hanson DeFusco and family, Zeinab Abbas. **Middle Row, Left to Right:** Grace Wang, Emily Mayfield and Family, Adwoa Imbeah, and Abena Ampofo. **Bottom Row, Left to Right:** Emmanuel Ampofo, Dr. Anna-Maria Karnes, Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor



**Above:** Abena Ampofo shows off her personalized Kente stole during the African Studies Virtual Graduation



**Above:** Abnea shows off her Kente stole in front of the Cathedral of Learning

# Connect with our Students!

## Zeinab Abbas

### Undergraduate

Zeinab Abbas, originally from Quebec, Canada, came to the city of Pittsburgh to study Political Science and French at the University of Pittsburgh. As the semesters went by, she picked up certificates in African Studies, Western European Studies, and Transatlantic studies. Because she wanted to focus on International Affairs and Comparative politics, these programs were perfect additions to her majors. Pursuing regional certificates also gave her the amazing opportunity to study abroad in Paris, France and in Entebbe, Uganda. In Uganda, she worked on the “Hidden People’s Project”. For five weeks, the team did research on marginalized groups of people within Uganda including survivors of domestic and social conflict, people with albinism, blindness, acid-attack survivors, children of war, and many others. This was accomplished by identifying said groups, why those groups were being marginalized, by whom, and to what extent. Her research focused on the division between the North and South of the nation and identifying key differences between the written laws of Uganda and its’ implementation or lack-thereof, in terms of political, ethnical, racial, and religious divisions. She also managed to get her French major to solidify her certification in African studies; as learning the language at a proficiency level has opened many opportunities and understandings, not only in the African continent, but around the world. Since French was spoken around her since she was little, she was able to pick it up quickly, which allowed her to focus on reading and writing.



## Abena Ampofo

### Undergraduate

Abena Ampofo, originally from Langhorne, Pennsylvania, double majored in Psychology and Africana Studies on the Pre-med track. She grew up in Accra, Ghana in a Ghanaian-Sierra Leonean family. As a result, most of her African education was West Africa-related. She longed to learn about the continent and the diaspora, which is how she found her way to the African Studies Program. During Summer 2019, she studied abroad for five weeks in Iringa, Tanzania through the generous support of the Benjamin Gilman International Scholarship and the Pitt Advantage Grant, the latter awarded exclusively to members of the Outside the Classroom Curriculum (OCC) Honorary Society. While in Tanzania, she studied Public Health and Swahili language and culture. As a premedical student hoping to work abroad, this experience was very enlightening as she got the opportunity to visit several health centers and interact with local health personnel. Since her return to the States, she has focused on increasing her Swahili proficiency and increasing students’ understanding of the continent through her position as an African Studies Program Student Ambassador. She plans to attend graduate school, increase her knowledge of the continent, and understand her role in the world.





# Connect with our Students!

Paula Esteves

## Undergraduate

Paula Esteves emigrated from a small town in Brazil to Pittsburgh in high school to further her academic career, and stayed for college to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. After her sophomore year, she had the opportunity to join a Law and Human Rights program through Projects Abroad, which allowed her to spend a summer in Cape Town, South Africa, living with a host family and interning at a non-profit law firm. The program also included human rights programs that allowed the interns to visit youth detainment facilities and do workshops with 13 to 17 year old kids in order to benefit their future academic or professional lives once they left prison. This experience shaped and shifted her political interest towards human rights and African culture in general, which led her into the African Studies program. The African-focused courses she chose influenced her to pursue the Certificate, which consequently expanded her interest and knowledge of the continent even more. The African Studies Certificate has offered her the opportunity to shift her previous career focus of Politics and Law into a broader, more international view. As a result, she has applied to Graduate schools abroad – mostly in the UK. This will hopefully assist in expanding not only her academic, but also cultural knowledge, and apply what she has learned at the University of Pittsburgh to her future international career.



**Below:** Students participating in the East-Africa Field Based Research and Internship Program in Uganda take a boat to Chimp Island in Lake Victoria.





# Connect with our Students!

## Adwoa Imbeah Undergraduate

Adwoa Imbeah graduated with majors in Psychology and Africana Studies, minors in Social Work and French, and a certificate in African Studies. As the daughter of Ghanaian immigrants, she has always been interested in different African cultures, especially as they were not taught in her schools growing up. Her desire to learn more led her to pursue a certificate in African Studies. Throughout her undergraduate career, she has worked with different organizations that help newly arrived African refugees and immigrants settle into Pittsburgh. As a tutor for Keep it Real, a student organization that works with Somali-Bantu refugees in Northview Heights, she formed an incredibly close connection with a family that extends past tutoring. Through ARYSE and JFCS's After-School Program, she led a group of mentors that worked with immigrants, many from East Africa, who needed homework help and support outside of the classroom.

For her fall semester of junior year, she studied abroad in Senegal, a dream she's had since middle school. While overseas, she volunteered at a local school, teaching English, French, and math to students of all ages, and she also often facilitated discussions at an after-school English conversation hour. In her French class abroad, she wrote a research paper about how mental health is treated in Senegal, which opened her eyes to the immense stigma and misconceptions of mental illnesses in West Africa. After Pitt, She is interested in utilizing her past experiences along with her certificate in African Studies to live in West Africa again, working in either the mental health or education sectors.



## Morgan Kelly Undergraduate

Morgan Kelly graduated with a dual degree in Neuroscience and French on the pre-medical track, a minor in Chemistry, and a certificate in African Studies. Throughout her college career, she had maintained her commitment to serving others and her interest in healthcare. During the fall semester of 2018, she completed the CIEE Dakar Development Studies program. Her course material examined the economic imbalance, environmental factors, and modernization in West Africa. Classroom learning was fortified by various excursions throughout both rural and urban communities across the country. The public health course, coupled with an internship at a medical clinic allowed her to participate in community health initiatives including distribution of mosquito nets and data collection on the rate of child vaccinations. Additionally,

she completed language courses in advanced French grammar and Wolof, the native language of Senegal. Finally, she lived with a host family, which, along with working in the community, facilitated full cultural immersion and propelled her language skills. She aspires to practice her passion for helping others and improve the quality of healthcare for underserved groups by combatting the negative influences she has learned about through her certificate course material. Taking courses in African Studies, along with studying abroad in Senegal, provided her with a distinct perspective on poverty, health care, and humanity, an outlook which she plans to use in improving the healthcare system once she becomes a doctor. After graduating from medical school, she plans to work for International Medical Corps, or alternatively Doctors Without Borders. Ideally, she will concentrate her work in West Africa in order to maintain her proficiency in French.



# Connect with our Students!

## Youhana Martin-Benansio Undergraduate

Youhana Martin-Benansio moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from the borough of Queens in New York City. His family emigrated from Africa to America. He graduates with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, a minor in Africana Studies, and an African Studies Certificate.

He has always been fascinated by Africa and its multiethnic countries. As a child of African parents, he visits Africa annually with his family. He is well versed in his father's and mother's lands, but is not fully versed in the entirety of the African continent and its islands. He wanted to acquire greater knowledge regarding Africa, so he became involved in the African Studies Program. His desire to pursue the African Studies Certificate is rooted in the fact that the program is committed to Africa's diversity, dedicated to its cultural inclusion, embraces continental awareness, maintains a strong sense of ties with African nations, and has a long-standing tradition of academic excellence.

During his course of study in the African Studies Program, he took up many courses that fostered his African Studies knowledge, courses such as Introduction to African Studies, African Presence in Latin America, West Africa/Era of Slave Trade, African/African-American Women Writers, and African Dance. He has served as a Student Ambassador and a Peer Advisor for the African Studies Program. He helped to organize and promote many university activities and events. He represented the university as a delegate in Washington, D.C., with several other students at the International Model African Union Conference in 2019. He also had the privilege of participating in the annual Washington, D.C., Career and Networking trip in 2020. The knowledge and experiences that he gained from the African Studies Program will unequivocally augment his international social work skills, permit him to do his part in the world to improve the human condition in terms of human security, and will lead him towards his career and overall life objectives.



## Emily Mayfield Undergraduate

Emily Mayfield is from Silver Spring, Maryland and graduated this April with a major in Political Science, a minor in Economics, and certificates in African Studies and Global Studies. Her interest in Africa began when she completed an internship at an NGO called the Triangle Project in Cape Town, South Africa during a gap year before coming to Pitt. In her work at the Triangle Project, she conducted research on LGBTI issues and contributed to policy recommendations and outreach strategies. During her junior year, she returned to Africa for a study abroad program in Morocco.

While in Morocco, she lived with a host family, took an Arabic course, and immersed herself in the culture through a variety of excursions and experiential learning activities. Throughout her time in Morocco, she learned extensively about migration in and around Morocco as well as perceptions of Moroccan migrants and cultural identity. She also completed an independent research project focused on climate refugees in sub-Saharan Africa and Morocco's recognition of and assistance to these individuals. Her experiences in South Africa and Morocco showed her how diverse and culturally eclectic the continent is. At Pitt, she has pursued courses with a global and interdisciplinary focus, and she has further developed her understanding of Africa whenever a writing or research assignment presented itself. For instance, she chose to write her capstone paper in political science on conflict management strategies that would help solve the ongoing civil conflict in South Sudan. Upon graduation, she plans to use her African Studies certificate to pursue a career in international development, with a focus on sustainability and climate change mitigation.



# Connect with our Students!

Grace Wang  
Undergraduate

Grace Wang is from outside Cleveland, Ohio. She is excited to be graduating with an African Studies certificate in addition to her dual degrees in Biology and Anthropology and minor in chemistry. During her time at Pitt, her experience with African studies has helped shape her future career goals.



After volunteering on a medical brigade to Korah, Ethiopia with Out of the Ashes, an organization that sponsors education, nutrition, and health care for orphans, she founded a student organization at Pitt. In summer 2018, with support from an ASP Scholarship, she led a team of 6 Pitt students to Korah, where they treated hundreds of patients and donated hundreds of personal care and hygiene products. In summer 2017, she traveled to Tanzania for five weeks, where she studied Swahili and social issues in health care. Her adventure in Iringa inspired her to pursue a second major in anthropology and a certificate in African Studies to broaden her cultural knowledge and understand health care from a unique perspective. Locally in Pittsburgh, she



has been a tutor for Keep It Real, tutoring Somali-Bantu refugee families in Northview Heights. From her time spent with different families over the past three years, she has learned so much about their culture, lifestyle, and the struggles they have faced as African refugees.

After graduation, she will be attending medical school at The Ohio State

University, where she hopes to study global health and pursue a Master in Public Health. Hopefully in a few years she will get to return to Africa as a physician, researcher, and educator, applying the knowledge she has learned in African studies and anthropology in her career.



# Connect with our Students!

## Monica Angelotti Graduate

Monica is from Erie, PA. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Economics from John Carroll University in Cleveland in 2017, and realized that she wanted to pursue graduate studies in a field that was more internationally-focused. She began her Master's degree in International Development at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of International Affairs (GSPIA) in fall of 2017. Her interest in African music and culture, and Africa's prevalence in the development field led her regional focus on Africa. The African Studies program and GSPIA have a close relationship, which helped her finish the degree and the certificate simultaneously. She chose GSPIA courses that focused on Africa or topics related to Africa, while learning about East African language and culture by studying Swahili. While she did not get the chance to travel to Africa during her time at Pitt, she was still able to learn a great deal about Africa through coursework and research. She served as a moderator for the annual Model African Union Conference hosted by Pitt and focused a large portion of her research in GSPIA on governance issues in Africa and was mentored by Africanist faculty. She hopes to spend time working or studying in Africa after graduation. She completed a Boren Fellowship in Tanzania to continue studying Swahili. She intends to pursue a PhD and complete field work in East Africa.



## Joshua Hudson Graduate

Joshua Hudson graduated with a Master of Public Policy and Management (MPPM) degree from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) at the University of Pittsburgh. This degree is a part of his U.S Army's Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program. He was inspired to pursue this career and degree after studying French at college in North Carolina. When his military career timeline opened up, he applied to become a FAO within the U.S. Army and was accepted pending completion of graduate school. He was fortunate to come across the African Studies program at Pitt, because it perfectly aligned with his military requirements, giving him the flexibility to take courses tailored to his degree. Fortunately, he was able to work at the U.S. embassy in Senegal for 12 months prior to attending Pitt. During that time, he worked as a liaison for visiting U.S. military and civilian personnel. He was also able to conduct extensive travels across the African continent, working with various individuals with ranging military and civilian backgrounds. This exposure broadened his understanding of regional issues and helped him to synthesize course work throughout his graduate studies. While at Pitt, he conducted extensive research on security related issues across Africa, ranging from civil wars, to terrorism, and transnational organized crime. His time at Pitt and in the African Studies program has proven immensely gratifying. He finds himself actively engaged in all things Africa, wanting to expand his knowledge in its vast histories, languages, and cultures. Upon graduation, he will be heading to the U.S. embassy in Rwanda to conduct security cooperation with the Rwandan military. He will be successful thanks to the knowledge that he has gained through the African Studies program.



# Connect with our Students!

Jessi Hanson-DeFusco  
Doctoral Candidate

Jessi Hanson-DeFusco, from Boulder, Colorado earned her PhD in International Policy at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), at the University of Pittsburgh. During her time at Pitt she held a GSA position for several years with the UCIS-African Studies Program as a student advisor.



ASP helped her develop her career goals to one day be a professor who both conducts research with national partners in a meaningful and culturally-relevant way, as well as provides experiential learning opportunities for university students through study abroad, guided research, or internships in African nations. The ASP Certificate helped her focus on selecting courses that offered opportunities to learn more about research in West Africa and grounded her focus quickly from the first year. It also helped her experience Tanzania for the first time as she was asked to lead the 2018 Study Abroad trip for Pitt. ASP faculty and staff also helped guide her funding opportunities for her dissertation research in Liberia, helping her secure over \$20,000 dollars to conduct a large field study including a national consultant and enumerator team.



While at Pitt, she conducted research, some of which was published on Ebola survivors and response systems. She also was able to dedicate three years to her dissertation, entitled: “Fatal Remedies: Child Sexual Abuse, and Education Policy, in Liberia”, which focuses on the relationship between child sexual abuse and girls’ education policies in Liberia.



# Study Abroad in Africa



Developing study abroad, field-based learning, and internship programs for students interested in African Studies continues to be a priority for the African Studies Program. Our goal is to provide opportunities for developing cross-cultural skills and helping students gain deeper firsthand experience and enhanced understanding of the continent of Africa. This summer we had over 50 students planning to study abroad in Africa! Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, all study abroad programs were postponed for the Summer of 2020. Many of our students plan to travel abroad as soon as possible and we worked to provide African experiences virtually through events.

In partnership with the Study Abroad Office (SAO) and various Departments and Schools on campus, ASP planned to engage with programs in the following countries:

- Ghana
- Uganda



Students also participate in programs in Africa through Pitt-recognized providers. These programs have been vetted by Pitt and approved for students to apply to third party organizations in order to study with them and receive transfer credits. Approved locations include:

- Botswana
- Ghana
- Madagascar
- Morocco
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda





# Celebrating Grants and Awards

## Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL) Program Strengthening African Studies and African Languages at Pitt

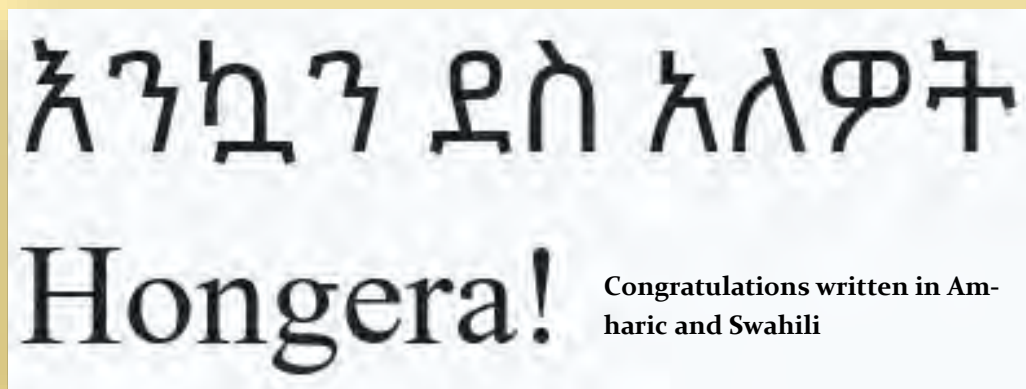
**Award Amount: 98,543.00 per year (2-year grant)**

The UISFL program provides funds to plan, develop, and carry out programs to strengthen and improve undergraduate instruction in international studies and foreign languages.

Our goals for this grant award are to:

- 1) Improve instruction in African Studies through creation of one new course “Introduction to the African Union” culminating in students participating in the International college Model African Union help in Washington D.C.
- 2) Improve African languages through enhancing levels offered in Swahili and Amharic (note: a visiting scholar from Ethiopia will be hosted for two years to help offer instruction in Amharic)
- 3) Enhance study abroad in Africa opportunities for students through the creation of programs in Ethiopia and Kenya (closely tied to our Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program)
- 4) Provide student support by offering a scholarship of up to \$2000 to 5 students per year traveling to an African country for study abroad.

Our goals for the project are firmly grounded in the African Studies Program mission to enhance knowledge and understanding of Africa for our students at Pitt. Through such initiatives, we aim to provide opportunities that allow students interested in African Studies to engage and experience a depth of African languages and courses as well as experiential learning both at Pitt and in Africa and through participation in the international Model African Union conference hosted every spring by Howard University in Washington D.C. The proposed project activities will build on the assets and structures already in place at Pitt and abroad by leveraging current resources with the Less Commonly Taught Language Center, Study Abroad Office, Africana Studies Department, School of Education, University Center for International Studies, and our partners in Ethiopia and Tanzania.



# Celebrating Grants and Awards

## Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad (GPA) Program

### Cultures of Innovation: The Intersection of Social Studies and Steam in East Africa

**Award Amount: 99,380.00**

The Fulbright Hays GPA grant will help strengthen ASP's outreach to the schools and engagement with K-12 educators in the Pittsburgh Area Schools. The program will be carried out in strong partnership with the School of Education with Dr. Maureen Porter as the Principle Investigator.

The overarching goal is to provide participants an opportunity to travel to East Africa (Kenya & Uganda) to acquire first-hand knowledge, experience, and resource materials for curriculum development that can be used to enrich African area studies teaching in the K-12 schools. The proposed project uses the place-based education design that provides the nexus for participants to investigate the intersections of Social Studies and Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. This innovative, grassroots approach to curriculum that is locally grounded, sustainable, and culturally responsive will provide an excellent way for participants to identify the dynamic convergences of STEAM as it happens locally and globally.

A call for proposals of participate in the program will be disseminated widely in the schools. We will select 15 participants (teachers and students) who will then begin orientation and training at Pitt before travel to East Africa (Uganda & Kenya) where they will spend 5 weeks collecting materials, visiting schools and other learning communities, and building their curriculum projects. Upon return to Pittsburgh, they will continue to complete the projects and create curriculum products that will be disseminated and shared widely. They will also participate in a Teach Africa Workshop that will be hosted by ASP and the School of Education for educators from our area.

## Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Exchange Programs

### Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) -Swahili

**We receive a FLTA to assist in teaching Swahili and running our language tables program. This helps engage students in Swahili classes as well as those not in enrolled in Swahili classes that are just interested in learning basic Swahili language and cultures of the Swahili speaking peoples of East Africa. The FLTA also assists with Global Hub activities and outreach to schools in the Pittsburgh area.**

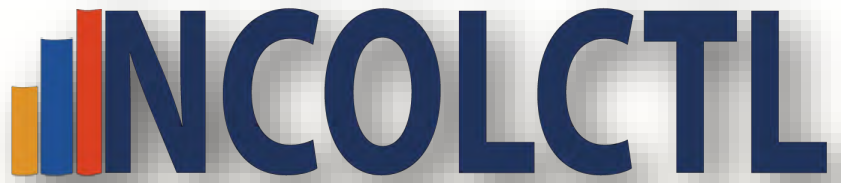
As part of the Fulbright Foreign Student Program, the Fulbright FLTA Program is designed to develop Americans' knowledge of foreign cultures and languages by supporting teaching assistantships in over 30 languages at hundreds of U.S. institutions of higher education. The program also provides young teachers of English as a Foreign Language the opportunity to develop their professional skills and gain first-hand knowledge of the U.S., its culture, and its people.

This upcoming academic semester, due to COVID-19 related travel issues, the FLTA will execute their responsibilities remotely. The FLTA will assist in teaching Swahili and with outreach to school students regarding learning about East Africa specifically and Africa generally. She will also work closely with our community engagement team as needed for community engagement activities.

Note: We hosted our first FLTA in 2015, and we have been hosting a FTLA every year since then. We are on our 6<sup>th</sup> FLTA. Out of the 5 FLTAs we have hosted, 3 have returned to the United States to pursue advanced degrees and one is completing their Ph.D. in South Africa with a teaching appointment at the University of Nairobi.

# Congratulations!

Congratulations to Dr. Filipo Lubua who was named the Vice-President/President Elect of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL)! NCOLCTL is an



organization that represents the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) in the United States. Their mission is to increase the number of Americans who choose to learn at least one of the LCTLs as a means of enhancing cross-cultural



communication among citizens of the United States. Their work focuses on these languages, which are becoming increasingly vital to the security, economic, social, and political welfare of the United States. They seek to improve the teaching and learning of these languages and to make them more generally available. NCOLCTL is the national voice for organizations and individuals who represent the teaching of these less commonly taught languages at both the collegiate and precollegiate level. They also promote the use of

technology, especially computers and the Internet, to enable a new virtual era in cross-cultural understanding, communication, and language education. We are very excited that Pitt's Dr. Lubua will be filling this leadership role in such a wonderful organization.

Dr. Lubua hails from Tanzania. He holds a Ph.D. in Instructional Technology and a master's in Applied Linguistics from Ohio University. He joined the Linguistics Department at Pitt in 2016, where he is currently a lecturer and the Swahili Program Coordinator.

Check out Pitt's Less Commonly Taught Language Center which offers Amharic, Arabic, Swahili along with 11 other languages spoken across the world!



**Top:** Dr. Filipo Lubua

**Bottom:** Pitt's Less Commonly Taught Languages Center host's "Coffeehouse events" where students learn about various languages while enjoying coffee and treats



# Congratulations!

## Abena Ampofo

Boren Award Winner, 2020-2021

Congratulations to Abena Ampofo for being awarded the prestigious Boren Scholarship to Tanzania!

“I was raised on PanAfrican values and consider Swahili an important asset to the movement. The summer after my junior year, I studied abroad in Tanzania

for six weeks through the Gilman Scholarship and loved it so much that I decided to commit to it,” she shares.

She originally learned about the David L. Boren Scholarship through newsletters from the African Studies Program and then was encouraged strongly by her Swahili instructor, Filipo Lubua to apply. The Boren Scholarship provides funding for one academic year of intensive language study of a less commonly taught language in regions designated critical to U.S. national security and global society.

Regarding the application, Abena says the process “can be a bit nerve-wracking since there are no updates after you apply. I spent a lot of time researching my country and interest areas and spent a lot of hours in the Honors College with Josh and Dr. Parikh. I also had the support of my language instructors, Filipo and Kennedy, as well as my entire support network.”

Due to the pandemic and resulting closure of borders, the program components for the 2020 Summer and Fall semesters are all online with plans being made for the 2021 Spring and Summer semesters to be completed in-person in Tanzania.

Summer 2020: In the summer semester, Abena completed a pre-program language evaluation with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages to gauge her language background. Afterwards, she enrolled in the African Flagship Language Institute, held virtually through the University of Florida. During this 8-week program, equivalent to one year of language courses, she attended classes five days a week for four hours and during three days a week, she had an additional hour of conversation with a native Kiswahili speaker. Classes were very interactive and she spent a lot of time broadening her vocabulary as well as sharing ideas on various topics including gender inequality, arranged marriages, cultural differences, and many more. Outside of class, they had weekly cultural events where students in different language classes put together performances for other students. They also had virtual museum tours and cooking classes.



# Congratulations!

## Abena Ampofo

Boren Award Winner, 2020-2021

Fall 2020: Similar to the Summer 2020 semester, this semester began with a language evaluation and then enrollment in a language maintenance course to prepare for her time abroad (hopefully)! Unlike the more structured Summer 2020 program which addressed grammar, speaking, vocabulary, and writing, the fall maintenance course will primarily focus on strengthening speaking and listening skills.

Language progress: Abena started learning Swahili in Tanzania through the Pitt in Tanzania program the summer before her junior year. She then arranged an Independent Study through the Swahili department with the assistance of Filipo and the



visiting Fulbright Teaching Assistant, Kennedy. With their help, her Swahili greatly improved. She not only had the experience of learning with others, but she also had one-on-one instructions with Kennedy. She began her summer program at an ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Level 2 thanks to them and her own hard work. With the assistance of her Summer 2020 instructor, Ms. Jessica Mushi and conversational partner, Christian, she completed the Summer program at a ACTFL Level 3— a big achievement after 8 weeks of intensive and immersive language exposure. She is thankful to her instructor, Paulo at the CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) in Tanzania for piquing her interest in Swahili and the African Studies program for sharing the many opportunities.

In the near future, she hopes to pursue a career in medicine and go on to work for an international organization such as the World

Health Organization. She hopes that by adding Swahili to her repertoire of African languages (Akan and French), she will be more useful to the continent and be a more marketable and adaptable professional.

The African Studies Program is so proud of Abena and all her accomplishments! We wish her well in her next chapter and look forward to staying connected!

# Cultivating African Scholars

## Nationality Rooms Scholarship Program

The Nationality Rooms Scholarship Program provides scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students seeking to study in countries across the globe. Various Nationality Rooms Committees as well as individual people and families provide these yearly scholarships to support the educational goals of students and promote the exchange of knowledge and ideas. We thank all these individuals for their contributions and support of students committed to studying Africa. This year we were thrilled to have 8 scholarships awarded to students planning to study abroad in Africa. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all travel was cancelled. However, the Nationality Rooms Scholarship Program will allow the students to utilize these funds in the future once it is safe to travel again.

Read about these incredible students below!



### Jerry Quattro

#### Graduate

My interest in Africa is rooted in my prior experiences in Senegal and the Gambia. I travelled to both countries in 2008 and 2017. The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) is equipping me with all the tools necessary to turn my passion for Africa into a career. Specifically, I want to focus on human rights, rule of law, good governance, and fighting corruption in Africa. It is my belief that these issues are paramount to ensuring a brighter more prosperous future for all Africans. I am extremely grateful to be a recipient of the African Heritage Room Committee Grant in Memory of Ms. Florence L.

Williams. Words cannot express the gratitude I have for this generous gift.

I will proudly represent the African Heritage Room, GSPIA, and the University of Pittsburgh. These experiences, supported by the Nationality Rooms, are an integral part of my pursuit of a career focused on improving the lives of Africans, ensuring their right to a peaceful and just society and government. My plans for the summer were to intern at Bright Kids Uganda (BKU). With BKU, I was planning on assisting in the improvement of the procedures of BKU's microloan program. Additionally, I was going to develop and present a training for loan recipients. The training would be centered around budgeting and loan repayment ensuring that recipients are equipped with the tools to succeed. I also intended to intern at the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), a Ugandan NGO focused on human rights, rule of law, good governance, and fighting corruption in Uganda.





# Cultivating African Scholars

**Matt Pribis**

**Graduate**

My interest in Africa starts with the fact that the first humans evolved on the African continent and that a significant portion of our human history as hunter-gatherers took place there. On top of that, the under-development, which often leads to unnecessary human suffering, draws me to Africa, to at least try to understand why, and if possible, lend a helping hand in some way.

The Nationality Rooms scholarship was hugely important to me. The whole idea of the Nationality Rooms as a beautiful example of cultural exchange right in the heart of Pitt's campus is one of the reasons I chose to do a master's degree at Pitt in the first place. I actually visited the Nationality Rooms for the first time as a high-school student on a field trip with my French class, and was completely blown away. To be associated in any way at all with the Nationality Rooms is a dream come true for me, so to speak.

My plans for the summer of 2020 were to design, deliver and evaluate a micro-loan distribution program with Dr. Picard and Bright Kids Uganda. We would have focused on distributing group loans to vulnerable populations within Uganda such as women, survivors of war, the disabled, and albino communities. The micro-loans would be combined with a business basics and financial literacy training course to set the recipients up for success.

I'm hoping that this valuable study abroad project isn't cancelled, but rather postponed until next summer. I'm ready to keep the ball rolling and hit the ground running next summer, with even more time to prepare for the field work.



**Mya Williams**

**Graduate**

Learning more about Africa has always been a goal of mine, and my time in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) has made the opportunity easier. I have a growing passion for children and youth development, and I planned to dedicate my time interning at a local refugee organization in Uganda with the hopes of gaining incurable knowledge and hands-on experience. Winning the Nationality Rooms Scholarship was an unforgettable blessing, and for that reason I hope to use the scholarship next summer to volunteer or intern as I would have done this summer.



# Cultivating African Scholars

Swathi Tata

## Undergraduate

As a French major, I learned about Africa through the francophone lens and began to appreciate the beauty of this continent that had been hidden from me for so many years. Africa is the birthplace of so many important moments in our history, including the conception of the human race itself. I began to read books and watch films by francophone African writers and directors. These stories illustrated both the mystical allure of the ancient continent and the ingenuity and resilience of its modern nations.

My interest in Africa and passion for healthcare led me to my vision of studying public health in the African continent and addressing epidemics. I was interested in Senegal specifically after reading scientific papers on their response to the Ebola crisis in 2014. During my time in the capital, Dakar, I would have taken classes on West African health issues and Senegalese identity while also learning Wolof, the native language of Senegal. I would have also worked with health researchers at l'Université Cheikh-Anta-Diop to study vaccine distribution in rural areas. I hoped this experience would have been a stepping stone in my career in international health. This also would have been my first experience in a francophone country and would have been a great way to strengthen my French into a better tool to use the future. Although I can no longer visit Senegal physically, I continue to explore the country from my own home, through books, films, and research articles.



Hope Finch

## Graduate

My interest in Africa began when I studied environmental justice issues in South Africa's Western Cape in the winter of 2018. That experience instilled in me a deep respect for and curiosity about the continent. I went on to write my undergraduate honor's thesis on the rhetoric surrounding South African land reform. I am currently pursuing a master's degree in International Development and hope to work in Southern Africa upon graduation.

I was incredibly honored and humbled to receive one of the Nationality Room Scholarships in honor of Ms. Florence L. Williams. This scholarship will allow me to further my understanding of some of the challenges facing South Africans and will allow me to put my knowledge of land issues in the country to good use. I planned to intern with the Trust for Community Outreach and Education, which amongst other things, helps the rural poor access land to facilitate sustainable livelihoods.



# Cultivating African Scholars

Claire McCreavy

## Graduate

An African proverb says, "If you think you are too small to make a difference you haven't spent a night with a mosquito." I find this quote particularly poignant because it employs the vector for many infectious diseases and serves as a reminder of the capability of one person to have an outsized impact. This principle guides me as I seek to expand my public health experiences, build a global health network, and learn how I can best make an impact. In February, I received the Stanley Prostrednik Health Sciences Scholarship to participate in the East Africa Field Based Research & Internship program in Entebbe, Uganda. I planned to conduct a health program evaluation for a local health organization during my time in-country.

Traveling to Uganda for my public health practicum would have allowed me to build on the experience I had last year when I served as the student trip leader on an undergraduate public health program in Kabale, Uganda and gained foundational knowledge from a non-profit health organization, Kigezi Healthcare Foundation. During this short trip, I shadowed local doctors, visited a traditional healer, and witnessed how cultural and structural barriers influence prevention and treatment of a multitude of diseases in the country. These experiences inspired me to return to Uganda for a longer stay and greater opportunity to make a difference.

My previous short-term global health experiences have been formative, but with a Nationality Rooms Scholarship, I am given the opportunity to create a meaningful relationship with an organization, increase my cultural humility, and conduct a comprehensive health program evaluation. I hope to return to the beautiful country of Uganda someday to conduct meaningful public health work.



Daisia Williams

## Graduate

I vowed that if given the opportunity and means to travel abroad it should be to a place where my being would be enriched and an inspiration to others. It is a personal mission of mine to travel to Africa to reconnect with my heritage and culture. As a person who at times feels disconnected from her true heritage and identity, I believe that fully immersing myself in my African culture will help me self-reflect and reaffirm who I am. My choice to travel to Africa is to be a representation for youth in Africa and an example for my peers who may see academic excellence and studying abroad as unattainable or undesirable.

When I received the call telling me I was awarded the George F. and Mary McGunagle Nationality Rooms Scholarship, I immediately burst into tears. Being awarded this scholarship means that my hard work is paying off and that I was meant to partake in this opportunity to make a difference. Being awarded this scholarship demonstrated the attainability for other minority students to be awarded this opportunity. This scholarship has afforded me an opportunity of a life-time that will aid my personal and professional growth tremendously. I look forward to the time when I can travel to Africa and help establish a transitional program for youth aging out of Bright Kids Uganda's care. The transitional program will provide youth with housing, employment, post-secondary, and life skills resources to help youth transition into self-sufficient, independent adults. With the McGunagle family willing to support my travel next year, I plan to travel abroad to Africa, Summer 2021, and work with Bright Kids Uganda to implement my transitional program. I am motivated, energized, and ready to indulge in this experience!





# Cultivating African Scholars

## Julia Raytselis Undergraduate

For as long as I can remember, I've always wanted to travel to South Africa. I am fascinated by the country's complex and rich history, diversity, and natural beauty. The Wendell Wray Memorial Scholarship would have provided me an opportunity to learn about this dynamic country, while studying public health and healthcare service delivery in Cape Town for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, specifically those impacted by HIV/AIDS. Though I wasn't able to travel to South Africa this summer because of COVID-19, through this program I would have been able to immerse myself in the local community, while shadowing and volunteering with NGOs focused on patient rehabilitation, HIV prevention, and nutrition. As a Neuroscience major and a Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies minor, I've spent a lot of time thinking about the way in which our own culture influences our medical system and treatment approaches, and the importance of being aware of these biases. I am confident that this scholarship would have provided me with the resources to have a cross-cultural experience, not only learning more about South Africa's culture and healthcare system, but also gaining a new perspective on my own country's systems. While I sadly was not able to go to Cape Town this summer, I hope to use this scholarship next year.



Above: View of Kampala, Uganda from the top of Uganda National Mosque

# Welcoming New African Scholars

This Spring the African Studies Program was overjoyed to welcome four brand new African Scholars! Four of our current and past staff and alumni gave birth to beautiful babies that we are so excited to welcome into the African Studies family! We celebrated during the Spring with many baby showers and have loved watching them grow (virtually). We can't wait to see what amazing accomplishments they will achieve in their lives.



Dr. Anna-Maria Karnes and Dr. Jessi DeFusco show off their belly bumps



Ria Joy Chaudhary, daughter of Dr. Anna-Maria Karnes, ASP Advisor



Sophi Dax DeFusco, daughter of Dr. Jessi DeFusco, ASP Alumna



Eli Anthony Kibet, son of Mercy Jemita, ASP Graduate Student Fellow



Alexandra Sarah Amnafu, daughter of Sarah Amnafu, ASP Alumna



# Weathering the Pandemic in Zambia

**"Weathering the pandemic in Zambia", by Holly Hickling, GSPIA grad (Master of Public Policy and Management) and Pitt employee.**

It's June 25, 2020. I'm sitting on a short stool outside a 3-room brick house with a corrugated iron roof. I'm facing a thatched roof kitchen. Three of my daughter's 6 cousins who we are staying with are sitting on a grass mat near me. One is singing in Nsenga, the local language here in Siyawalaya Village (in Petauke District in Eastern Povince in Zambia, a landlocked country in the middle of Sub-Saharan Africa). My daughter's aunt is cleaning lumanda, a local leafy green vegetable, which we will eat later. Another cousin and his friend are playing with a makeshift soccer ball made of plastic bags in the yard. It's overcast; it's "winter" here. But the sun has made a few appearances today. It ranges from the 50's at night to 70-80 degrees or so during the day.

My daughter, who will be 11 in July, and I are in this this village for 2 weeks, without electricity or running water, taking in what daily life is like for her cousins whose family gets by through subsistence farming.

In mid-April this year I embarked on a 6-month unpaid leave of absence from working at Pitt to travel to Zambia to provide my daughter the experience of forming childhood

memories with her Zambian family. We've actually spent most of our time with city family, though that wasn't our original plan. In Lusaka, the capital, there are shopping malls, luxury hotels, and yes, electricity and running water, though not in every neighborhood every day. There are slums in the city, too.



hands and hugging as usual. It was an open air field with no stands and a nice breeze, and this village hasn't recorded any Covid-19 cases yet,\* so maybe it wasn't a very high risk for a "mass infection event."



**Above:** Holly Hickling sitting with family outside the house in Siyawalaya Village.

**Below:** Sheer joy on day one in the village: holding baby chicks

I moved to Zambia in 2005 to work with refugees. I met my daughter's would-be father that same year. Nzinzi (rhymes with "Lindsay") was born in 2009 and I continued to work here, shifting to working in development economics research in the field of public health, until 2011.

A couple of days ago we went to a local amateur soccer match. There were over 100 spectators watching. The team from this village played the team from nearby "Minga Stop." No one wore masks. People were shaking



# Weathering the Pandemic in Zambia cont.

Yesterday, we visited the local K-7 school. Schools have been closed for a couple of months, but they reopened just for grades 7, 9, and 12, the grades that take a national exam (which if you don't pass, you can't advance to the next grade, or, for grade 12, earn your high school diploma). All of the teachers and students wore masks. It's required by law, but clearly hard to

enforce proper usage. Most of the students had their noses out or their masks around the chins.



As of today, Zambia has recorded almost 1,500 Covid-19 cases, 18 deaths, and around 1,200 recoveries. "Expats," as well as educated and affluent Zambians seem to be taking coronavirus precautions seriously. Many others have kept on with life as usual. It's hard to stay home when you live hand to mouth every day. That said, many people's livelihoods have been disturbed since tourism, and even travel within Zambia has slowed down, and bars and restaurants, sporting events, concerts, etc. were temporarily closed or

cancelled, just like in the U.S. (Bars are still closed and gatherings are still restricted.)

**Above:** Shelling peanuts from the farm with the cousins

Planning this trip that coincidentally coincided with the Covid-19 global pandemic and nationwide (and global) protests against systemic racism has had some surprisingly serendipitous benefits as well as challenges beyond anyone's control. While many people at home were laid off or lost their income, and while my colleagues had to shift work plans, cancel events, move to online teaching and mentoring, I was just hanging out in Africa. I had already saved up and maneuvered to sustain myself and my daughter and pay my bills during this time.

While Nzinzi's teachers and classmates had to learn how to teach and learn remotely, which was really challenging for some families, I had already pulled her out of 5th grade and registered to home school for her the remainder of the school year. (We've sporadically had "lessons".)

But Covid-19 did affect us in other ways. We had wanted to spend the majority of our time in the village and visit many other family members, but soon after we arrived, non-essential travel was restricted. We had to shift our expectations to focus more on learning about urban Zambian daily life and culture. Until now. We mostly stayed home with one city family, wore masks when we went out, and washed and sanitized our hands a lot.

# Weathering the Pandemic in Zambia cont.

While still in Lusaka, we had the privilege of attending a Solidarity Against Structural Racism rally at the U.S. Embassy. Organizers marked in chalk places for protesters to stand 2 meters apart. There were Americans of many races there with Black Americans at the forefront, as well as expats from other countries and local Zambians. Everyone wore masks. There were speeches, chants, a song, funeral drumming, and a prayer, but we had to focus our criticisms on the U.S. only. In order not to violate the wishes of our Zambian hosts, we had to avoid mention of global structural racism or global police brutality, especially any criticism of Zambia, though there is brutality and death at the hands of police here. As a person drawn to activism, I was disappointed this wasn't a forum where we could criticize the effects of colonialism and global imperialism, which has been tied to U.S. policing from the slave trade until today. I was glad, however, to participate in a small way in what was happening at home, and I hope to do more when I get back. In this vein, keep an eye out for what the club "Pitt Prison Outreach" is up to this year. I have advised them the past few years, including their annual "Education and Incarceration" conference.

During our "down time" in Lusaka, my daughter got to play a lot with another cousin, learn ZamEnglish (mostly British) a little Nyanja, the language of Lusaka, and assimilate into daily life in a (lower) middle-class Lusaka neighborhood. One of her favorite daily activities was walking to the local *kantemba* (hole-in-the-wall, or makeshift, corner shops) to buy bubble gum. We both watched African TV Evangelists as well as telenovelas from the Philippines, Spain, and India. I practiced guitar a lot and started a YouTube Channel with a former student, Saket Rajprohat, who has stayed in India after Fulbright sent everyone home. On our channel, [COVID Diaries](#) we discuss our experiences with the coronavirus pandemic while abroad and interview people with varying experiences, including recent Pitt grads Fiona Eichinger (an African Studies Certificate recipient) and Prachi Patel who got sent home early from their humanitarian programs in Malta and Sri Lanka, respectively. We also interviewed Ron Idoko, from Pitt Diversity and Inclusion, who is running a fantastic web series of [town halls](#), including one on Health, Law Enforcement, and the Media and others that are relevant to Covid-19. Like and subscribe to our channel to see what we'll talk about next!

You can follow Holly's photos and learn a few Nsenga words on her Instagram, [@nyanjawords!](#)



**Right:** Attending a protest at the US Embassy in Lusaka with my daughter and her cousin, Taba.

# Affiliated Faculty Reports

ASP affiliated faculty are drawn from multiple disciplines and the professional schools representing the full spectrum of the study of Africa. They are dedicated to teaching about Africa, research that explores the contributions, challenges, strivings, and achievements related to Africa within the wider global context. They engage in the formulation of the program's academic and intellectual agenda, and nurture student learning and research interest on Africa related topics. Faculty play a key role in guiding and equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for their respective professional career paths on the global stage. More than 60 faculty members are affiliated to African Studies by virtue of their teaching, research and service experiences related to Africa, including African language instructors. In this report, we shine a spotlight on some of their scholarly activities promoting African Studies through their teaching, research and service. ASP affiliated faculty organize and host activities outside the classrooms that foster student and faculty engagement with the continent, encouraging interdisciplinary research that lead to improved understanding of Africa.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 many of our affiliated faculty were not able to travel and complete much of their research this academic year.

## Carol Mastrangelo Bove

### Senior Lecturer, Department of English

Dr. Carol Mastrangelo Bove is pleased to announce that her book entitled *Kristeva in America: Reimagining the Exceptional* was published by Palgrave Macmillan publisher. In it, she includes a discussion of Africa in her analysis of Paula Marshall's Caribbean-American novel *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People*.





## Julius Kitutu

**Chief Diversity Officer, Associate Professor School of Nursing**

Dr. Julius Kitutu became a Member of the Commission on Nurse Certification Board of Commissioners (CNCBOC), which is an autonomous governing body of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). The CNCBOC develops policies and procedures that ensure the CNCBOC's autonomy in decision-making over essential certification functions including, but not limited to, the development and administration of the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Examination. The CNC offers certification to graduates of degree programs and Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) faculty who meet the eligibility requirements established by the CNCBOC.



## Marcus Rediker

**Distinguished Professor, Department of History**

Dr. Marcus Rediker continues as Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History with a strong interest in the history of Africa. He worked with director Juan Gélas on a documentary film series entitled *Les Routes de l'esclavage* aired across Europe and Africa in 2018-2019. He is currently a member of the Advisory Board for a new documentary film series, "Creating the New World: The Transatlantic Slave Trade," directed by Stanley Nelson, Firelight Films, New York, to air on PBS in 2021.



# Events & Activities

The African Studies Program hosts events to engage students in learning outside of the classroom and encourage discourse and discussion about a range of topics and themes. During the fall and early spring we were able to host events in person as usual. As we all know, events in the spring and summer looked much different in the wake of a global pandemic. We took this opportunity to engage virtually with our connections across the US and Africa. We were thrilled to see our community grow to include friends, family, and alumni in Africa who previously were not able to join in-person activities.

## Events, Activities & Engagement:

Throughout the academic year, we coordinate and sponsor several major activities— with support from other units across the University, depending on the faculty roles and topic for discussion:

- ◇ Critical Research on Africa Series
- ◇ Let's Talk Africa Series
- ◇ Race, Science, and Technology in the Global African World
- ◇ Book Club



**Above:** Students meet in the Global Hub to discuss returning home from Study Abroad, share stories, and meet others who studied abroad in Africa during the previous academic year.

Student groups focus on African affairs and a series of events and activities aimed at promoting cultural awareness. There are four key groups on campus that foster effective networking and support including the African Students Organization (ASO), Pan-African Graduate & Professional Student Union (PanAf), Model African Union Club (Pitt MAU), and Swahili Students Association (SSA). Student groups that feature African culture and heritage host six special events each year.

Other Featured events:

- ◇ **Global Hub Grand Opening**
- ◇ **Sustainable Development: Uganda**

Due to COVID-19 we were unable to participate in College Model African Union, host the High School Model African Union, or have various spring events like our Spring Conference. We look forward to virtual events during the upcoming academic year!

## Events & Activities

**The Critical Research on Africa (CRA) Lecture Series** provides a space for intellectual dialog on Africa for the academic community not only at Pitt but also in our neighboring and consortium institutions. Faculty and graduate students that are strongly committed to interdisciplinary research on Africa gather to share and discuss their current research, exchange new ideas, and network.

**Let's Talk Africa (LTA) Series** provides a space for our learning community to talk about Africa related affairs. It is particularly designed to bring students together to talk about their experiences studying abroad in Africa, doing internships, research, or other learning activities pertaining to Africa. It is a great forum that allows students to acknowledge and talk about Africa's achievements while also exploring the problems and seeking policy solutions. The program is organized and run by students. This summer we expanded the Let's Talk Africa Series to focus on the global COVID-19 pandemic and ran two successful events focusing on the impact of the pandemic in various countries in Africa. One exciting facet of the virtual environment is the ability to include speakers and guests from across the world. We are looking forward to growing this part of the series in the next academic year!

Our inaugural **Book Club** launched a new series centered around reading and discussion of books written by African authors, set in Africa, and/or featuring themes related to Africa. The book club aspires to be a forum for the Pitt community and public to come together to discuss various books, relevant issues and themes, and join together as a community. We are excited to continue to grow this new series.



# The Global Hub Grand Opening

The **Global Hub Grand Opening** on August 27, 2019 was an important milestone in achieving the Global Plan for Pitt. The Global Hub is a student-centered, university-wide resource, advising, and engagement center that enhances students' educational experience with an international and global focus. The Executive Director of Global engagement Belkys Torres and the inaugural Global Hub Manager Karen Lue both spoke at the event. They introduced some of the goals for the Hub, including it serving as a study space, international welcome center, and club meeting and tabling venue. African Studies is excited to engage with students and visitors at the Global Hub and host some of its events there.



**Above:** Kennedy Barasa speaking Swahili with a student

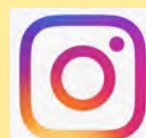


**Above:** Ruth Mundundu of Afia Catering shares her Congolese food with students



**Right:** Dr. Macrina Lelei, Associate Director with students Abena and Casey

Follow the  
Global Hub



# Sustainable Development: Uganda

The **Sustainable Development: Uganda** event on October 21, 2019 featured Dr. Victoria Nalongo



as a speaker. As a leading expert with years of Ugandan fieldwork experience, she discussed sustainable development perspectives in the country. Additionally, she shared about the children's home she founded, Bright Kid's Uganda, which aims to res-

cue vulnerable and economically disadvantaged children from the dire circumstances in which they are currently living, by providing housing, their necessities, and education. The event was followed by a Round Table Discussion that Victoria hosted. Several students who have participated in the field based learning and internship program in Uganda were present to engage with



**Above:** Victoria explains her projects related to physical disability and acid attack survivors in Uganda to students with the help of Ashley Saxe, the Coordinator of the East Africa Field Based Research and Internship Program which partners with Bright Kids Uganda.



the discussions and share their own personal stories. Not only did attendees value the opportunity to meet Victoria, but this event additionally allowed them to ask questions and discuss logistics and opportunities.



## Critical Research on Africa

The Critical Research on Africa (CRA) Lecture Series provides the academic community with a space for intellectual discussion on Africa. These events bring in faculty and graduate students studying Africa and provide them with a venue to share their current research, exchange new ideas, and network with one another. On November 15, 2019, Dr. Cati Coe spoke on kin and non-kin elder care narratives and patterns in Western Africa, particularly in Ghana. Dr. Coe's research focuses on transnational migration, care, and education in West Africa. She is the author of *The New American Servitude: Political Belonging among African Immigrant Home Care Workers* (2019) and *The Scattered Family: African Migrants, Parenting and Global Inequality* (2013). She was a co-editor of *Transnational Aging and Reconfigurations of Kin Work* (2017) and *Everyday Ruptures: Children, Youth, and Migration in Global Perspective* (2011). It was an honor for African Studies to have Dr. Coe as a lecturer in our critical Research on Africa series; we look forward to working with her again in the future.



## Race, Science, and Technology in the Global African World

On February 3, 2020, as part of our Race, Science, and Technology in the Global African World: A Lecture Series, Omolade Adunbi gave a lecture entitled **Crafting Spaces of Value: Special Economic Zones (SEZ), Infrastructure, Energy, and Extractive Practices in Nigeria**. They drew on their ethnographic fieldwork in Nigeria to explore the notion of SEZs as an exclusive state regulatory practice. Omolade provided the example of artisanal refineries organized by youths in the Niger Delta. The lecture helped attendees to evaluate the relationship of SEZs to oil extraction and state regulatory practices. In the last two decades, there has been an exponential increase in the number of countries setting up special economic zones. SEZs aim to remove hindrances to trade and create opportunities for economic growth. While much of the academic literature on SEZs focuses on the state practices in establishing SEZs, no attention is paid to other practices that bear semblance to SEZs. The African Studies Program enjoyed hosting such a unique presentation on a vitally important topic.





# Let's Talk Africa

**Let's Talk Africa (LTA) Series** offers an educational setting for our community to talk about Africa-related affairs. This student-organized series successfully brings students together to share their experiences studying abroad in Africa, completing internships, and participating in research or other learning activities pertaining to Africa. LTA is the perfect forum for students to acknowledge and talk about Africa's achievements while also exploring problems and brainstorming policy solutions.

On February 28, 2020, Jessica Erin Hanson-DeFusco presented on the **Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse Among Girls in Liberia**. While Development literature has shown that education reduces early marriage, it fails to account for the aspect of schooling where young girls could be sexually abused. Jessica has researched this correlation through a mixed-method approach and presented her findings with us at the event. Jessica's ethical and policy-relevant research was vital to share, as it came at a time when girls were entering the classroom at higher rates each year, yet without fully understanding how to ensure their protection. African Studies plans to follow this increasingly important topic and Jessica's research moving forward.



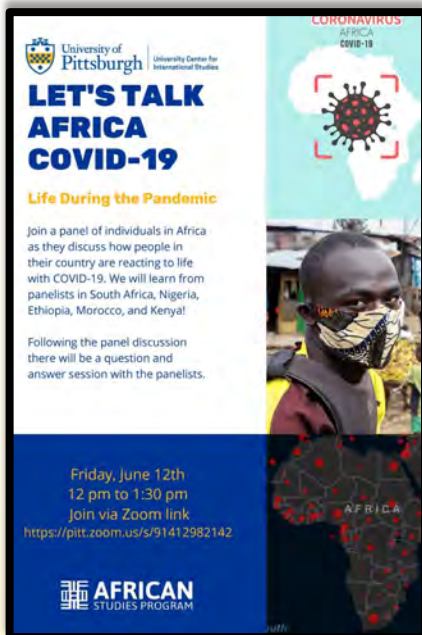
**Left:** Jessi with her research team while she was collecting data for her dissertation in Liberia

Despite unfortunate circumstances posed by COVID-19, we remained committed to holding our LTA Series virtually. This afforded us the surprising yet beneficial opportunity to expand the LTA Series' audience; both presenters and attendees alike were able to join the events from all over the globe!

# Let's Talk Africa

On June 12, 2020, African Studies began our Let's Talk Africa: COVID19 edition with a panel discussion entitled **Life During the Pandemic**. Panelists from South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, and Ethiopia discussed how people in their countries have reacted to life with COVID19, the constraints and issues posed by the pandemic, public health measures, and ideas for the future of the crisis. Additionally, panelists answered thought-provoking questions from the audience. The event was extremely engaging and all too relevant.

The Let's Talk Africa: COVID19 series continued on July 24, 2020 with the panel discussion entitled **Impact on Education**. We heard from educators from Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania. All of them provided us with unique insights on the current status of education in their respective countries. UNESCO estimated that over 262.5 million children from pre-primary and secondary school were out of school because of COVID-19 closures, which translated to approximately 21.5% of the total population in Africa. The panelists touched on school start dates and delays, food and hunger issues, child safety, and goals and policies to combat educational issues presented by COVID19. We plan to keep our Let's Talk Africa: COVID19 edition going throughout the course of the pandemic.





# African Studies Book Club!



African Studies has introduced a new and exciting **Book Club** series, which is open to the entire Pitt community and the public. Each Book Club event fosters thought-provoking and engaging discussions surrounding topics related to Africa and race. Our first Book Club discussing *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on July 31, 2020 was extremely successful. Attendees were asked to evaluate their favorite characters, question their conceptualization of race and identity, think critically on their understanding of Africa and African immigrants to the US, and engage in small group discussions in breakout rooms. The event was enjoyed by so many that we had to host a follow-up discussion event one week later. African Studies is excited to continue the Book Club series throughout the 2020-2021 school year.







## Our Vision & Mission: Looking Ahead

The African Studies Program (ASP) promotes the

interdisciplinary study of Africa at the University of Pittsburgh through teaching, research, and outreach. The program provides students with a rich learning environment that facilitates a comprehensive and critical understanding of Africa, and the development of new ways of thinking about Africa within the larger global context.

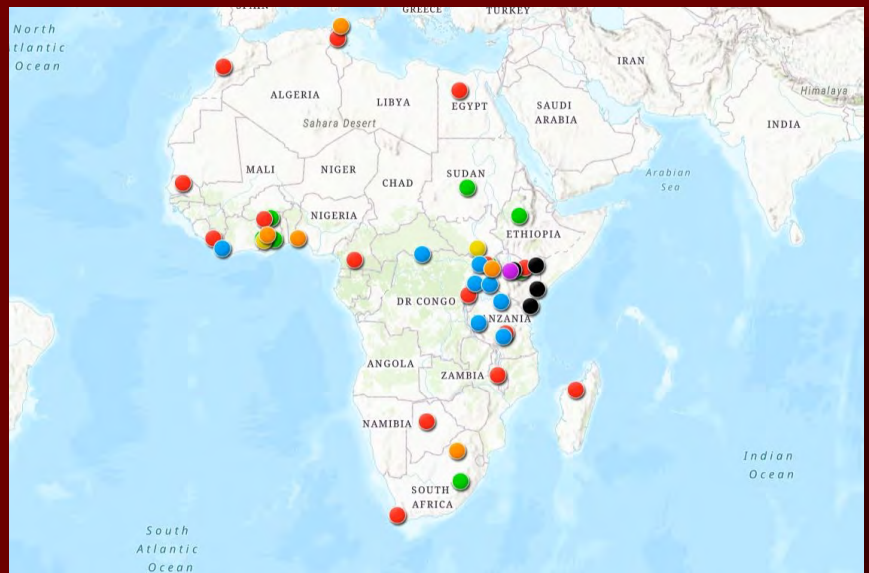
Through a diverse array of courses and outside of the classroom learning activities students are able to develop a better understanding of the continent's internal dynamics and its evolving place in the global space. Our mission is to train and prepare the next generation of African Studies scholars and experts who will apply their language skills and their knowledge in their professional careers and personal lives as they make their impact in the world.

## With Appreciation

Our appreciation goes out to our affiliated faculty in the Arts & Sciences, as well as the professional schools for their active participation in advancing ASP's mission. The University community contributes immensely to making the program successful through teaching, research and service. We continue to take the program to greater heights for the benefit of our students and future generations of Africanist scholars, experts, and leaders.

Our appreciation also goes to our students, both past and present, for their interest in African Studies and for their desire to help to make the world a better place.

Last but not least, we thank our staff team, who work tirelessly to ensure that we are successful at what we do. We are grateful to all of our stakeholders. We look ahead to progress, growth and continuing the conversation about all things Africa. We invite you to join us!



The map above depicts the various connections the African Studies Program at Pitt has in the continent of Africa. The reach of the African Studies Program in Africa is quite large; however, even more expansive is Africa's footprint on African Studies. The yellow dots identify where our current students or their families reside or are from. The various opportunities that African Studies offers—internships, study abroad programs, and research—are identified by the red dots on the map. The blue dots on the map represent the locations that our scholarship winners travelled to in Africa. The black dots depict where our FLTAs originate from. African Studies' visiting scholars can be identified on the map by the orange dots. As you can see, these scholars come from northern, southern, western, and eastern parts of Africa. An interactive and informative version of the map is available [here](#).

Join us on the journey! We look ahead to progress, growth and continuing the conversation about all things Africa. Follow the us on social media and check out our newly re-designed website.

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