



Africa Diaspora Academic Network – United Kingdom (ADAN-UK)
Trustee Report: 01 June 2023 – 31 May 2024

1. About ADAN-UK

ADAN-UK was established to empower African academics by leveraging their expertise to address critical development and governance challenges across the African continent. The network serves as a dynamic platform for meaningful discussions that drive policy innovation, foster strategic partnerships, and promote the exchange of best practices between Africa and the UK. Our mission is to cultivate and sustain a vibrant community of practice in the United Kingdom, dedicated to advancing practical solutions to Africa's pressing issues. Through research, learning, training, and the exchange of knowledge and ideas, we aim to bridge academic scholarship with real-world impact, shaping policies and initiatives that contribute to sustainable development and effective governance in Africa.

The network strategic objectives are:

- i. To serve as a hub of expertise on a wide range of educational, cultural, and socio-political and economic issues affecting Africa for UK-based policy makers, institutional leaders, civil society and development partners;
- ii. To actively engage in and contribute to national and transnational collaboration and partnership initiatives that spur innovation and knowledge exchange across UK and Africa;
- iii. To empower and strengthen the visibility and capacity of ADAN-UK members to readily identify, actively engage and thereby influence the dominant agendas, discussions, and programs of the UK government and higher education institutions relating to Africa;
- iv. To engage as equitable partners with key UK based academic institutions, policy makers and development partners when providing advice on, or the development of ideas, information and application tools that support positive policy development and practice on Africa;
- v. To actively engage with and influence UK's informal and formal research agenda and activities on all aspects of Africa and advise on rigorous and appropriate interpretation and dissemination of research findings and their use to underpin initiatives aimed at advancing Africa's sustainable development;
- vi. To identify, develop and share best practice in Africa and globally;
- vii. To facilitate opportunities to increase the impact of the contribution of the African diaspora academics to the development and good governance of Africa directly with: Africa and UK Governments, Academic Institutions, and Development Partners;
- viii. To contribute to the capacity building of HE and FE institutes, government departments and other development partners both in the UK and in Africa on the treatment of Africa and its development through networks and partnerships across organisational boundaries

Trustee Names: Judy Muthuri, Angela Muthoni



2. Activities and objectives in the year ending 31 May 2024

ADAN-UK did not receive any grants or funding from individuals or donors, and delivered its objectives through generous in-kind contributions of space and time by dedicated academic volunteers from universities across the UK. Despite the challenges of limited funding opportunities, we successfully implemented several initiatives that align with our mission. These include:

2.1 Mentorship program

ADAN-UK facilitated a structured mentorship program pairing PhD students of African origin with senior African academics based in the UK. These mentorship relationships provided:

- Guidance on academic progression, including research design, publication strategies, and career development.
- Support in navigating the UK higher education system, addressing challenges such as imposter syndrome, scholarship funding applications, and networking.
- Culturally informed mentorship with mentors sharing insights drawn from their own experiences as African scholars in UK academia, fostering a sense of belonging and resilience among mentees.

2.2 Black History Month and Community Engagement

- Introduced primary and secondary black young students to academic pathways, encouraging them to aspire towards higher education.
- Facilitated engagement with Black academics, who shared their journeys and experiences in academia, serving as role models for the next generation.
- Provided interactive workshops and discussions, covering topics such as Black contributions to various academic fields and strategies for excelling in school and beyond

2.3 Research and Capacity Building

We organized and hosted two highly successful webinars aimed at enhancing the academic and professional development of African and Black scholars:

- Publishing in Top Academic Journals webinar provided practical insights into the publishing process, including selecting the right journals, structuring papers for high-impact publications, and responding to peer reviews.
- Navigating the UK Institutional Environment webinar designed for early-career academics and postgraduate students. The webinar explored the structural, cultural, and professional landscape of UK academia, equipping attendees with strategies to thrive within it.

3. Challenges and Opportunities

3.1 Challenges

Given the difficult financial pressures UK universities are facing, ADAN-UK faces significant challenges in both financial and human resource capacities, which impact our ability to fully realize our objectives as we would like: For example

- Limited Funding: Despite our efforts to secure external funding, we have yet to receive financial support from donors which restricts our ability to expand programs, provide incentives for volunteers, and invest in long-term sustainability.
- Reduced Volunteer Engagement: Historically, ADAN-UK has relied on the goodwill of academic volunteers from UK universities to contribute their time and expertise. However, with growing financial pressures on UK higher education institutions,



academics are facing heavier workloads, making it increasingly difficult to attract and retain volunteers.

- **Institutional Barriers:** The evolving policy landscape within UK universities, including budget cuts and shifting institutional priorities, has made it more challenging to secure in-kind support such as access to venues, administrative assistance, and networking opportunities.
- **Sustainability Concerns:** Without a stable funding stream or a consistent volunteer base, sustaining long-term programs such as mentorship and widening participation initiatives remains an ongoing concern.

3.2 Opportunities

Despite these challenges, ADAN-UK is well-positioned to explore new opportunities for growth and impact:

- **Strengthening Partnerships:** By forging stronger collaborations with UK universities, research institutions, and professional networks, we can leverage institutional resources and expertise to support our initiatives.
- **Alternative Funding Sources:** Exploring grant opportunities, corporate sponsorships, and philanthropic contributions could provide financial stability and enable the expansion of our programs.
- **Digital and Hybrid Engagement:** The shift towards online and hybrid academic engagement presents an opportunity to reach a wider audience through virtual mentorship, webinars, and capacity-building initiatives with minimal financial costs.
- **Alumni and Community Involvement:** Engaging past beneficiaries of ADAN-UK programs as mentors, advisors, or contributors can help build a self-sustaining support network that fosters long-term growth.
- **Advocacy and Visibility:** Raising awareness of ADAN-UK's impact through strategic communication, social media engagement, and partnerships with academic and professional organizations can attract new supporters and potential donors.

4. Appreciation

ADAN-UK extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and institutions that have played a vital role in advancing our mission. We deeply appreciate the dedication and commitment of our academic volunteers, who generously contribute their time, expertise, and mentorship despite their demanding workloads. Their efforts have been instrumental in supporting early-career scholars, fostering knowledge exchange, and strengthening our academic community. We acknowledge the unwavering support of individuals and organizations who continued to champion the charity's cause, advocate for its initiatives, and help navigate challenges. Their encouragement and belief in ADAN's mission inspired us to keep pushing forward. We thank the UK universities and research institutions that gave us access to spaces, resources, and collaborative opportunities. Their contributions enabled us to host impactful programs, from capacity-building webinars to mentorship initiatives and widening participation events.