



K-12 Outreach: Sustainable fashion workshop led by Rwandan Artist, Innocent Nkurunziza

UNC AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER: MEETING OUR MISSION

TITLE VI GRANT IMPACT REPORT 2023

CONTENTS

01

AN INTRODUCTION

03

MILESTONES

05

OUR APPROACH

10

AFRICAN ARTS AND
HUMANITIES

12

STRENGTHENING
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

14

ASC VISITING SCHOLAR
PROGRAM

16

K-5 DIGITAL LEARNING OF
CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

18

WAY FORWARD

02

THE CENTER'S MISSION

04

KEY INSIGHTS

09

MEASURING PROGRESS

11

THE ART OF RESISTANCE

13

SUSTAINABLE FASHION AS
ART

15

AFRICA FEST

17

LESSONS LEARNED

19

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Kaira Ba performing at Africa Fest on November 13, 2021, at the Fedex Global Education Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASC	AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER
UNC	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
STEM	SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH
MSI	MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTION
CC	COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SEALLF	SOUTH EAST AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE FORUM
FLTA	FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING ASSISTANT
MOU	MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
SERSAS	SOUTHEAST REGIONAL SEMINAR IN AFRICAN STUDIES
HBCU	HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE UNIVERSITY
WSSU	WINSTON SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
NRC	NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
AASP	ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS
UNCG	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
CGI	CENTER FOR GLOBAL INITIATIVES
WV	WORLD VIEW
DPI	DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
LTL	LEARNING THROUGH LANGUAGES
UWC	UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



Headpiece created and worn by a Durham School of Arts student during a workshop on African art and sustainable fashion led by ASC's Artist-in-Residence, Rwandan visual artist Innocent Nkurunziza

The African Studies Center: An Introduction



Established in September 2005, the African Studies Center (ASC) at the University of North Carolina (UNC) has since experienced consistent growth, expanding African Studies research and education within and beyond the university campus. With 120 affiliated faculty members across disciplines, the ASC plays a vital role in higher education, government service, and the private sector, offering over 250 African-content courses and mentoring numerous master's and doctoral students.

The ASC has secured significant research funding in the humanities, social sciences, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), and health-related fields. The center's faculty affiliates have successfully competed for domestic and international grants and fellowships for linguistic and literary research, including funding to develop innovative strategies integrating African language learning into professional schools.

Through collaborations with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and community colleges (CCs), the ASC has fostered networks of shared knowledge and expertise, supporting faculty research as well as development of African content courses. At UNC, the recent launch of innovative MA and PhD programs in the Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies further enhances the ASC's opportunity to collaborate with faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students. Each element of the ASC's programming emphasizes diverse perspectives, encouraging conversations among members of our many constituencies at UNC and beyond.

The center's community engagement is epitomized by Africa Fest, an annual event celebrating the rich diversity of African cultures through music, art, poetry, and other expressive forms. Since 2019, each Africa Fest has cultivated a deep appreciation for Africa's rich heritage and global impact. The second major element of the ASC's outreach is the K-5 curriculum development supported by a \$500,000 Oak Foundation grant. The project's web-based lesson plans on contemporary Africa will be available to K-5 teachers across the state. The ASC's outreach extends to the military, drawing on UNC faculty to provide African Studies expertise to Fort Liberty, among the country's largest military bases.

These efforts firmly position the UNC African Studies Center as a national leader in African Studies education and research. The ASC's upward trajectory will continue, through new collaborations on campus, in the community, and with institutions, scholars, and students in Africa.

"People were always appreciative because our job as a center is not to enhance ourselves. Our job as a center is to enhance the faculty, students, and the library. All of it felt very positive... I can't say enough about how proud I am of the work that we did as a center."

Barbara Anderson, former Associate Director of ASC

The Center's Mission:

To facilitate collaboration and dialogue among faculty, students, scholars, K-12 educators, and develop linkages with African universities and institutions to exchange knowledge, promote resource sharing, and expand a scholarly community

To support African-related teachings and research through avenues like K-16 outreach, research and travel grants, language instruction, workshops, and events

To sustain ongoing and new Africa-vested initiatives and relationships

The African Studies Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, was founded as a hub for research, discourse, and learning about the African continent. A key focus of the center's work is to strengthen collaborations between African scholars and institutions and their counterparts in the US. This effort has led to several notable partnerships, such as the collaboration between the center and UNC Malawi, as well as ongoing partnerships with the University of Ghana (Accra, Ghana) and the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, (Dakar, Senegal). As part of its mission, the center promotes the exchange of ideas and knowledge ranging from art, politics, gender, sustainability, health, and religion.

The highly competitive Title VI federal grant, awarded by the US Department of Education, has played a central role in shaping the center's engagements with its many communities. Through this grant, the ASC has also allocated significant resources to various local academic activities, including language learning, curriculum development, and outreach activities with K-12 schools. This impact report highlights our learnings, key achievements, challenges, and opportunities during the period from 2014 to 2023.

"Title VI has been really helpful in providing the necessary expertise and support for African Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill to develop in a more organized and sustainable way."

Ada Umenwaliri
ASC Associate Director

"Title VI has been crucial in organizing the Southeast African Languages and Literatures Conference (SEALLF). This conference brings together leading scholars of African languages and literature in the US Southeast region and beyond. As part of SEALLF's academic highlights, it has published an edited volume after every conference. Additionally, SEALLF has also served as a platform for professional development for young Africanist students (from the US and Africa), especially for the Fulbright FLTAs [Foreign Language Training Assistant] and other graduate students. It has enriched teaching and provided our students with a fresh perspective on new developments in the African continent."

Dr. Samba Camara,
Teaching Assistant Professor, UNC

"Ethiopia in the Global African Diaspora' was well received by students who reported to me that the materials presented expanded their perspectives thinking about Africa and African countries in the context of the larger global environment... The ASC funding had a measurable impact for African Studies at UNC-Greensboro. We have been able to build on this experience to further student interest in Africa and its different regions."

Dr. Hewan Girma,
Assistant Professor of African American and African Diaspora Studies, UNC-Greensboro

MILESTONES

African Studies Center is established

ASC secures first Title VI grant

ASC establishes a visiting scholar fund to support residences, talks, and conference participation for scholars

Southeast Regional Seminar in African Studies (SERSAS) partners with the SouthEast Africanist Network for its annual regional conference, with ASC is a key facilitator

ASC develops programming for "Sustainability in Africa" and UNC Center for Global Initiatives' "Opening Access to Global Opportunities/Breaking Down Barriers"

ASC receives a three-year grant from the Oak Foundation for the project, "K-5 Digital Learning of Contemporary Africa"

2005

Wolof introduced

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into between the ASC and the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar.

2010

NC Global Distinction Program launches under UNC World View

2014

ASC facilitates a MOU between Winston Salem State University and the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa

2018

ASC introduces Chichewa with UNC Malawi for Health Sciences students

ASC introduces Africa Fest

Yoruba introduced

ASC establishes an MOU with the University of Ghana

2019 - 2020

2022

Over 20 digital lessons for K-5 Learning on contemporary Africa developed

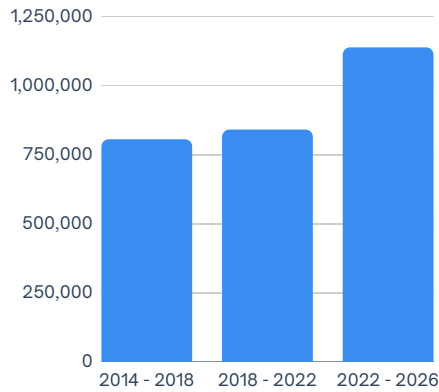
2023

KEY INSIGHTS:

THE FIGURES BEHIND THE FACTS

GRANT FUNDING

In the last three grant cycles, the size of the Title VI funding to the ASC has increased by 40%



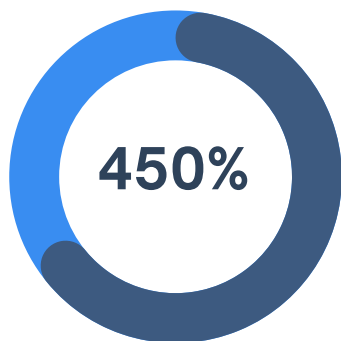
INCREASED REACH

By leveraging technology the center has increased the reach of its programs by 1000%: events that averaged 20 attendees now attract over 200



NUMBER OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In 2014 only 6 community colleges offered NC Global Distinction. That number has since grown to 22 in 2018 and 33 in 2023 marking a 450% increase in 10 years.



NC GLOBAL DISTINCTION

In 5 years, the number of community college graduates with Global Distinction on their transcript has increased by approximately 70%. Spring 2023 boasted the largest graduating class with 124 graduates.



Our Approach

The ASC employs a collaborative approach in its programming, exemplified by its relationships with scholars and faculty at North Carolina Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and MSIs. The center works with faculty colleagues at these institutions to identify opportunities that build on existing activities, and to support new platforms that promote Africanist research and teaching from diverse perspectives.

The ASC's course development grants have enabled more than fifty faculty at UNC and our partner MSIs to update their courses and develop new classes that reflect global perspectives, including African content. This support increases student awareness of and interest in Africa, particularly at HBCUs and MSIs.

After four four-year cycles of Title VI programming, the ASC has developed an iterative approach that fosters flexibility and responsiveness to the changing demands of its communities. By leveraging technology, the center has expanded its collaborations with African experts and scholars through jointly organized virtual events. This expansion to online platforms, while maintaining an active program of in-person events, has dramatically increased access to our African content as evidenced by increasing attendance at all of the center's events.

Looking forward, the ASC plans to increase the number of African scholars and experts it sponsors through fellowships and visiting grants.

Collaborating with Minority Serving Institutions

Winston Salem State University (WSSU) has been a long-standing MSI partner of the ASC. This partnership has provided substantive benefits to both parties.

The ASC has worked with WSSU's Director of International Programs to identify more than twenty WSSU faculty members with a research or teaching interest in Africa who now receive

regular direct information on the center's activities. WSSU faculty members have become Faculty Research Fellows, thereby providing them access to UNC library resources for their research and teaching. Other WSSU faculty, including African language instructors, have been supported through National Resource Center (NRC) funds to attend annual meetings of Association of African Studies Programs (AASP) in Washington D.C. to learn about opportunities to expand or enhance African Studies at their institution.

Through ASC support, WSSU faculty have enhanced their courses by including global content, context, and perspectives. The ASC continues to facilitate connections between WSSU and academics in Africa by providing funding for participation at Africa-related global events.

Internationalize the curriculum and increase faculty and student involvement in global issues and activities, especially African Studies, through the NC Global Distinction program in at least twenty-five community colleges

Building Bridges

Action: In the summer of 2019, the ASC provided a travel grant to Dr. Rose Sackeyfio (WSSU, English Department), supporting her participation in a conference in Ghana, where she presented a paper on the work of renowned Ghanaian-American author Yao Gyasi. The conference provided opportunities to exchange ideas and exposure to knowledge that enhanced Dr. Sackeyfio's teaching and research, in turn enhancing the global education of her students.

Result: Using the information and insights she gained from the conference, Dr. Sackeyfio enriched two of her courses on Black women's literature, diaspora, race, and identity.

The NC Global Distinction program offers students at UNC Community College System schools the opportunity to earn a Global Distinction certification by completing at least fifteen credit hours of globally intensive courses and participate in eight international activities. Students gain global experience through thirty hours of participation in either study abroad or domestic intercultural activities. Each student's capstone presentation describes their global learning and its impact on their academic and personal development. On graduation, students receive the "Graduated with Global Distinction" designation on their transcript, an indication to potential employers and others that these graduates bring skills and insights that set them apart.

The Global Distinction program is a UNC World View initiative, supported by the six area studies centers at UNC. World View is UNC's public service program that provides K-12 and community college educators with opportunities to globalize their teaching. This representation across world regions increases the program's capacity to provide teachers and faculty members with access to truly global expertise.

When the Global Distinction program began in 2013, only six community colleges participated. In the first year, that number grew to twelve. At the end of the 2014-2018 Title VI grant cycle, that number grew to eighteen, marking a 300% increase and 100% above ASC's target of nine. In the following grant cycle, that number increased to twenty-six.

Dr. Hewan Girma of the Dept of African American and African Diaspora Studies at UNC Greensboro (UNCG), an MSI, was supported by ASC to update a special topic course entitled "Ethiopia in the Global African Diaspora." Offered for the first time in fall 2020, the course highlights the interconnections between Ethiopia, Africa, the Indian Ocean world, and the Black Atlantic.

Dr. Roy Doron of WSSU's History Dept received support through the program to enhance WSSU's Africa courses in a new military history concentration. ASC funding helped Dr. Doron design a new course titled "The Nigerian Civil War." The course examines the country's history through the lens of the Biafran War by focusing on its origins and legacies, and to examine the broader issue of postcolonial conflict in Africa.

These and other courses have afforded students the opportunity to examine structural barriers to social policy issues in Africa, such as food insecurity and healthcare systems.

Strengthen UNC's capacity to teach African languages and produce knowledge on Arts, Humanities, and Social Science engagement with STEM issues through UNC and partner MSI activities

Case Study: Opening Access, Breaking Barriers

Action: The ASC supported the UNC Center for Global Initiatives' (CGI) "Open Access, Breaking Barriers" initiative, by facilitating engagement with global curriculum and opportunities for underserved UNC communities. Through financial and technical support to faculty and students at partner MSIs and CCs, the ASC has enhanced linkages between STEM, African Studies, and African languages in courses across several disciplines.

Result: Open Access has led to the engagement of diverse perspectives, spanning a wide range of regions, disciplines, interests, and stakeholders including first-generation college students, LGBTQ students, and students of color. Through these courses, increased numbers of underrepresented groups have access to international activities and programs.

In the first year of this grant cycle, the number of MSIs participating in North Carolina Global Distinction program was 18, and the goal for the first year was to increase that number by one. In the 2018 - 2019 academic year, ASC and World View (WV) offered research and travel grants to five MSIs and CCs, and exceeded its initial target of one.

ASC also supported the several MSIs and CCs to globalize their course modules. Examples include: 1. **Winston Salem University:** Women's Writing in a Global Context and Black Women's Identity. 2. **Robeson College;** Introduction to Ethics 3. **Gaston College;** Professional Practices in IT 4. **Durham Tech:** Writing/Research in the Disciplines 5. **Forsyth Technical College;** Introduction to Ethics.

While targets for the entire grant have been met, ASC continues to support North Carolina faculty and added three new institutions in its second year. Fayetteville Technical Community College revised course Race and Ethnic Relations. Through the revision, students learn about the healthcare system in Ghana. Studying current patterns of health and healthcare from a global standpoint includes the historical foundations of economic inequality. Piedmont Community College revised its course Art Appreciation. Students now learn about sub-Saharan African art from both a historical and contemporary perspective. In addition, ASC supported a workshop focused on Africa at the Davidson County Community College with sixty-two college instructors across North Carolina.

ASC's public events present cutting-edge scholarship and access to African thought leaders

Globalizing Learning

On December 8, 2020, the ASC organized an expert panel in partnership with other UNC area studies centers on “The Future of Language Learning in North Carolina.” Experts from the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the schools of education at UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Pembroke, and UNC-Wilmington. Fifty-six K-12 teachers participated. The conversation included discussions about supporting less-commonly-taught languages, heritage community engagement, the Seal of Biliteracy, adjustments to remote teaching/learning and new technologies, pedagogical techniques, cultural knowledge at the forefront of curriculum, and the benefits of language learning.

ASC has organized activities that connect science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics to Africa-focused topics. Each of these events provided learning opportunities for faculty and students at UNC and for our K-12 and public audiences. In its most recent Title VI grant cycle, the center surpassed its targets for public events.

The ASC brings visiting African scholars from diverse disciplines to campus, presenting their work to students, faculty, and staff in every college and professional school across campus. Speakers have included: Hakeem Belo-Osagie (Teaching Professor at Harvard and Nigerian entrepreneur), Professor Sandra Klopper (former Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Town), Professor Willy Mutunga (former political prisoner and Kenya's former Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court), and Melibea Obono (activist and Professor at the National University of Equatorial Guinea).

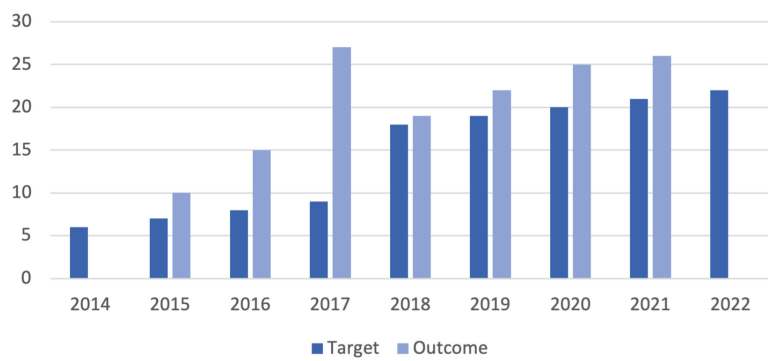
These and other events have addressed topics such as climate change, nutrition, business and technology, land use, gender and political power, refugee crises, human rights, visual and performing arts, sexuality, COVID-19, urban planning, and religion.

The ASC also hosted a dialogue session with visiting Ugandan scholar Dr. Peter Waiswa of Makerere University, founder of two leading maternal and infant health centers. Dr. Waiswa discussed “Strategies for Building Effective Research Partnerships in Africa: Incentives, Challenges, and Risks.”

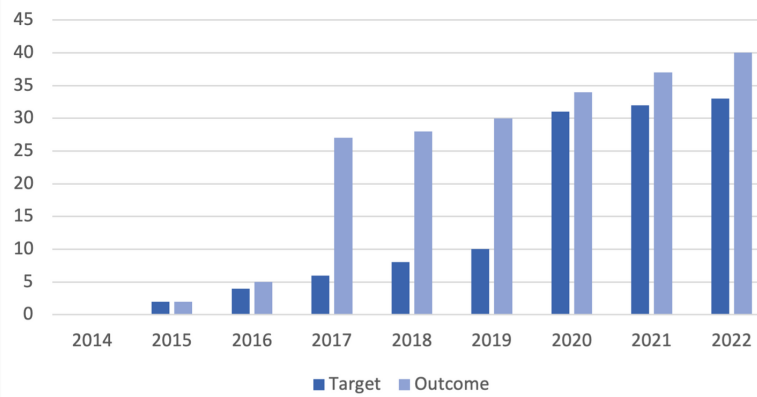
With the COVID-19 pandemic, ASC acknowledged the critical need to examine its impacts throughout Africa. The center organized a dialogue on “The Status of the COVID-19 Vaccine in Africa” in collaboration with UNC's Institute of Global Health and Infectious Disease to present expert insights on the distribution of vaccines in several African countries. While the center plans its programs and activities for the long term, it also responds to current events such as COVID-19, seeking to share expert research relevant to our many audiences.

Measuring Progress

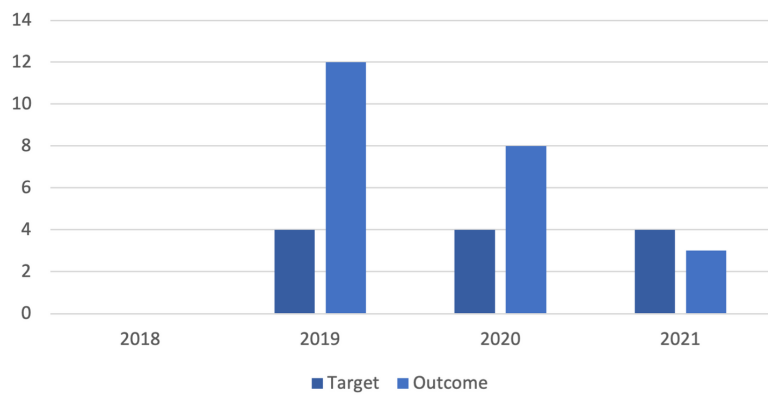
Number of courses and activities that integrate or update global/Africa content



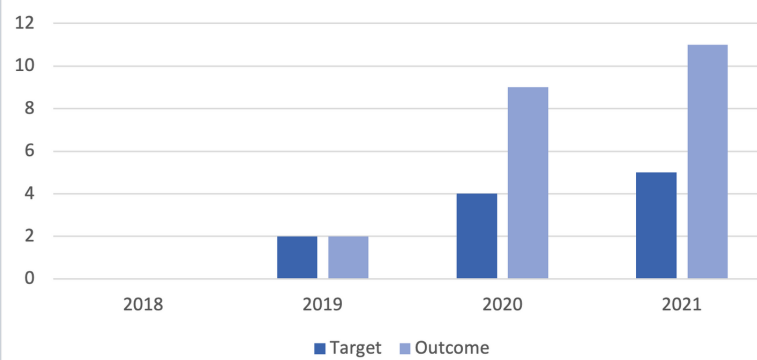
Number of courses created or revised



Number of K-12 and community outreach events



Number of visiting African scholars and linkages/ research travel by UNC and WSSU



ASC's work has supported UNC's emergence as a national leader in the field of African Humanities, including art history, literature, film, and music, all with a focus on contemporary Africa.



view exhibit +

**Diakaridia Traoré:
Exploring Mali's Religious
Cultures**



view exhibit +

**Ancestral Root/Racine
Ancestrale: Photographs
by Rachel Malaika**

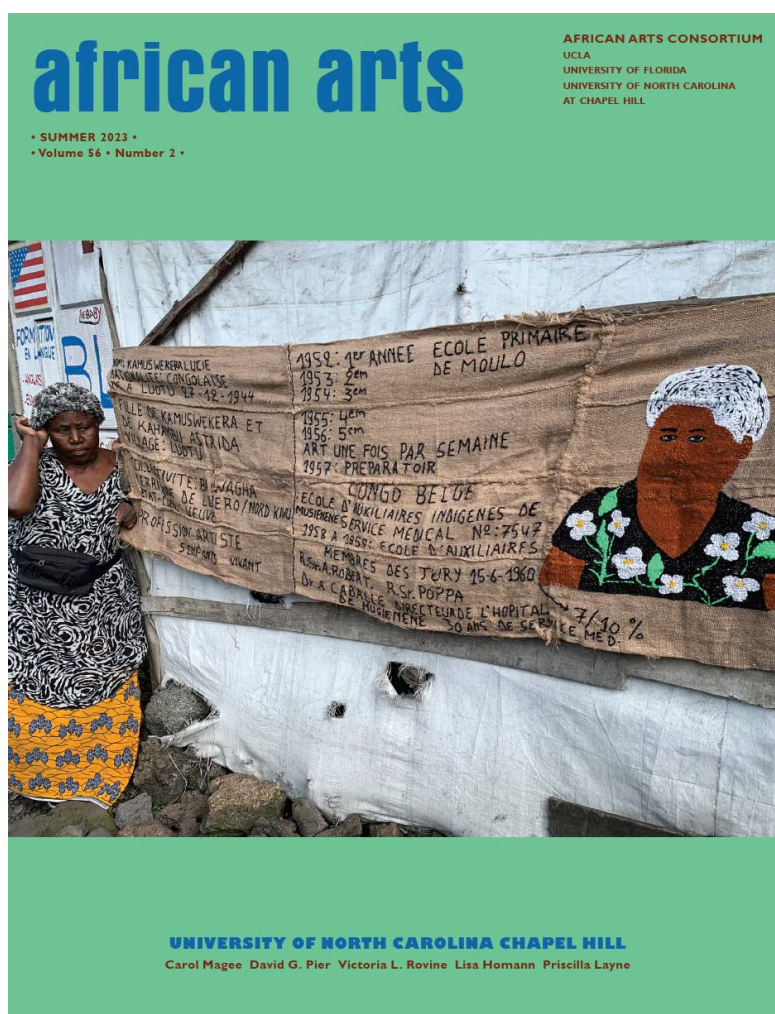


view exhibit +

**Existing in the Shadow:
Vanessa Tembane**

The ASC fosters innovative research by faculty and students in the arts and humanities, and in related social sciences. The center's activities in these fields also contribute to K-12 outreach through the faculty humanities experts who have collaborated with teachers to develop curricula. For many non-specialist audiences, the arts and humanities provide a "way in," introducing Africa through performances and exhibitions that lead to further engagement and sustained interest. The musical and literary performances of ASC's annual Africa Fest exemplify the power of the arts to create connections to African cultures and histories.

Since 2014, UNC has been one of four institutions in the African Arts publishing consortium. African Arts is the premier international journal in the field of African art history, and it is widely read by scholars and students in related disciplines. The multidisciplinary UNC Editorial Board manages the article selection and review process, as well as the solicitation of special thematic issues. The visibility provided by African Arts has enhanced the graduate programs in art and art history, music, and other fields. In addition, the UNC Editorial Board members bring their own graduate students into the consortium's activities, providing invaluable training for early-career scholars.



The center also curates online visual art exhibitions, each presenting the work of an African artist who has not previously exhibited outside their home region. The series gives our audiences access to talented African artists' work and provides valuable exposure for the artists. Each exhibition is accompanied by an online event that brings an ASC-affiliated graduate student or faculty member into dialogue with the artist. The exhibitions remain on the ASC website as a permanent resource: <https://africa.unc.edu/our-work/african-art-online/>

The ASC produces many other arts and humanities-related programs, including special lectures, collaborations with the Ackland Art Museum (UNC's art museum), visiting artists, art exhibitions in the Global Education Center, and sponsorship of faculty research on music, literature, film, and art in Africa.

The Art of Resistance: Exploring the Intersectionality of African Art and Social Justice Movements

In the Fall of 2019, ASC collaborated with UNC Global to host a semester-long art exhibition showcasing the work and teachings of Ramón Esono Ebalé. Ebalé is a world-renowned graphic novelist and political cartoonist. For over a decade, Esono Ebalé has used his work to criticize the long-ruling, oppressive government of Equatorial Guinea, his country of origin. Through his art, he addresses corruption, authoritarian control, and extreme poverty in Equatorial Guinea.

The exhibition featured the best of Esono Ebalé's work alongside the digital art produced through the #FreeNseRamoncampaign. The theme "Art of Resistance" provided a framework for discussions of political expression, governance, art as protest, and the abuse of power in Equatorial Guinea and elsewhere in Africa and beyond.



Ramón Nsé Esono Ebalé. Photo by Emily Baxter.



"Trazando Estados" by Ramón Nsé Esono Ebalé

ASC organized a workshop for teachers in grades 6-12, using Esono Ebalé's work and experience to enrich teachers' knowledge of Africa. The workshop's themes were "connecting art and personal narrative" and "translating art in the classroom." Esono Ebalé was the key resource person at this immersive workshop, demonstrating to teachers how he uses art to communicate complex issues of human rights and democracy in Africa. The center also organized a speaker series that addressed these themes. Ambassador Mark Asquino, former U.S. Ambassador to Equatorial Guinea, spoke on his efforts to address human rights, democracy, and corruption in Equatorial Guinea. Melibea Obono, a writer and activist from Equatorial Guinea who advocates for women's gender equality in Africa, spoke on Equatorial Guinea's LGBTQ+ and human rights issues.

Strengthening International Education through K-12 Outreach

The African Studies Center has periodically organized symposiums under its Learning Through Languages (LTL) program. In 2019, it organized its fifth LTL symposium, which had 192 participants representing schools across North Carolina. The symposium allowed students to conduct preliminary research in their language of study. In preparation for the event, area studies centers organized a webinar for participating LTL teachers. Teachers learned pedagogy/tips for preparing students to write in the target language, providing feedback to students, and preparing them for oral presentations and Q&A.

Recently, the K-12 world language teacher licensure program has been expanded to offer licensure in seventeen languages, most of which are less commonly taught – for ASC, it includes Swahili and French. In partnership with the Middle East Center, ASC rolled out its second Middle East and African Cultures Teacher Fellows program. This 8-month teacher fellowship seeks to explore Middle Eastern and African history, cultures, and diaspora through structured experiential learning experiences across North Carolina. Two webinars on Intro to Middle East and Africa took place for its fifteen fellows.

“Student feedback on course content and teaching materials through the ASC Title VI grant has been very positive. Many students at North Carolina K-12 schools and community colleges have reported increased knowledge and awareness about the continent of Africa because of the materials developed. Furthermore, students have reported wanting to travel to Africa to learn more about the culture and people because of these teaching materials.”

Hazael Andrew
Associate Director of UNC World View, UNC Chapel Hill

The center continues to collaborate with the NC DPI through the Teachers Advisory Council. On November 11, 2019, NC DPI and UNC's Area Studies Centers held a Twitter chat titled #NCIGLOBAL. In support of International Education Week, it generated global content, including materials on the least commonly taught languages and how teachers can introduce those materials in the classroom.

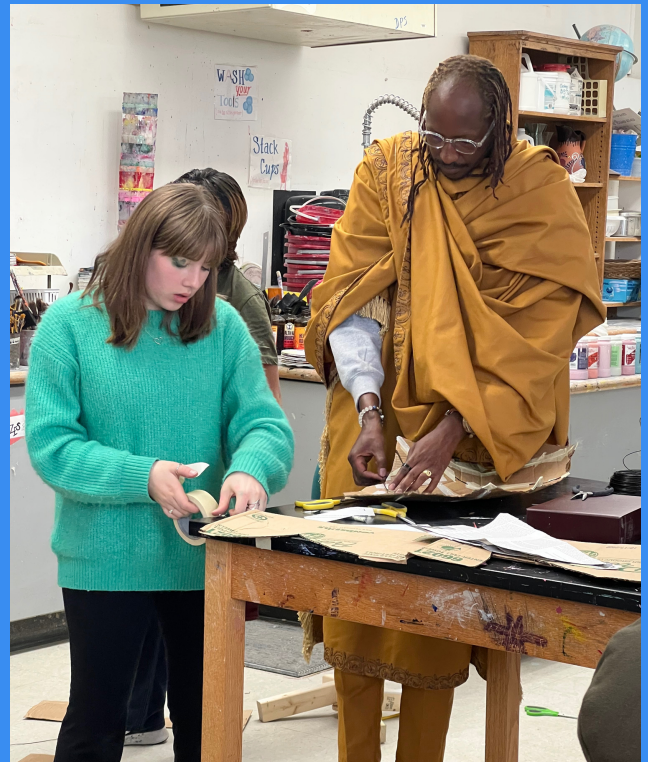
Sustainable Fashion as Art

The ASC hosted a two-week event for K-12 students from area schools featuring Innocent Nkurunziza, a renowned Rwandan artist and art teacher based in Kigali. Nkurunziza was in residency at UNC for a month, working with ASC and an ASC faculty affiliate in the Dept of Anthropology. Through two workshops and a public presentation of the students' work, Nkurunziza introduced the students to the creation of fashion from sustainable materials.

Nkurunziza also engaged in an extended project at the Durham School of the Arts, an art-focused secondary magnet school focused on the visual and performance arts. Working with art teacher Amber Santibanez, Nkurunziza guided students in the conceptualization and creation of wearable art made of recycled materials.



K-12 Outreach: Sustainable fashion and African art event hosted by the ASC



Innocent Nkurunziza crafting clothes out of paper at the workshop

In addition to Nkurunziza, the program was facilitated by Tara Wilson, a K-5 art teacher from nearby Guilford County, and Blessing Adedokun Awojodu, UNC Yoruba Foreign Language Teaching Assistant and amateur fashion designer. They worked with ten participants aged ten to fifteen to develop unique fashion pieces from recycled materials, including paper bags, food containers, clippings from magazines and newspapers, and paint, pens, and glue. The participants showcased their work and shared their insights at an event attended by their friends and family.

"Innocent Nkurunziza's residency gave us the opportunity to reach kids both inside and outside their classrooms, at weekend workshops and a public event, and at the Durham School of the Arts.

The paper fashion show was the culmination of the younger kids' work with him, and the results were amazing. The kids were so proud of their beautiful paper gowns--it was very thrilling to see that. And they all had a chance to learn something about African cultures and clothing, learning by doing."

Dr. Victoria Rovine
ASC Director

ASC Visiting Scholars Program

The ASC's Visiting Scholar Fund has brought academics, artists, and practitioners from various disciplines and professions to UNC. Through lectures, collaborative research with UNC faculty, exhibitions, and performances, these visitors to campus bring cutting-edge issues and analysis from across Africa to the center's audiences.

Visiting Scholar's Program Highlights

2015: Two distinguished jurists delivered lectures-- The Honorable Thokozile Masipa, South African Superior Court Judge, delivered the 2015 William P. Murphy Distinguished Lecture, and Dr. Willy Mutunga, former Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Kenya

2016: Dr. Asonzeh Ukah from the University of Cape Town, Head of Department, Chair of Religious Studies, Director of Research Institute for Christian and Society in Africa. Dr. Ukah presented on the role of evangelical churches in the African urban experience.

2016: Hope Azeda, Director of Mashirika Performing Arts in Kigali; a playwright, director, and human rights activist

2016: Malika Lueen Ndlovu, South African poet, and creative facilitator, participated in the multidisciplinary conference performance "Telling Our Stories of Home: Exploring and Celebrating Changing African and African-Diaspora Communities."

2017: James Isabirye, Ugandan folklorist and musician, led an interactive workshop on Ugandan musical instruments, such as the embaire xylophone, and discussed their traditional and modern social contexts

2018: Student activists Khanyisile Mbongwa, graduate student at the University of Cape Town and affiliated with the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape (UWC); Sive Shosha, undergraduate law student at UWC; and Xolani Zekani, post-graduate student at UWC, participated in a panel discussion on the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa

2019: Hakeem Belo-Osagie, Nigerian entrepreneur and philanthropist, spoke to a large audience as part of the ASC's Business in Africa series

2019: Ramo'n Nse' Esono Ebale', artist, political cartoonist, and activist from Equatorial Guinea.

2019: Dr. Trifonia Melibea, Professor of Social Sciences at the National University of Equatorial Guinea, novelist, and LGBTQ rights activist

2021: Vanessa Tembane, South African artist of Mozambican heritage, showcased her online exhibit "Existing in the Shadow."

2021: Mr. Boubacar Boris Diop, a Senegalese novelist, journalist, and screenwriter, delivered the keynote address at SEALLF

2022: Health Scholar in Residence, Dr. Daniel Atwine from Uganda

2023: Artist-in-residence and arts entrepreneur Innocent Nkurunziza, from Kigali, Rwanda

2023: Rachel Malaika, Congolese photographer, showcased her online exhibit, "Ancestral Root/Racine Ancestrale."

2024: Artist-in-residence Astou Gueye (Toussa) from Dakar, Senegal.

2024: Health Scholar in Residence, Dr. Joyce Wamoyi from Tanzania.

Africa Fest: Celebrating African Art, Culture, and History

Since the first annual Africa Fest, organized by ASC Associate Director Ada Umenwaliri in 2019, the event has grown in ambition and audience each year. Africa Fest is the ASC's largest public event, reaching regional public audiences as well as the university community. The one-day event showcases African musical and dance performances by professionals and UNC student groups, educational activities, cuisine, and local African-owned businesses, bringing the rich traditions and flavors of the continent to North Carolina audiences.

In collaboration with an array of campus and town partners, the ASC has hosted Africa Fest four times; the 2023 fest set new attendance and engagement records, with approximately 500 attendees that encompassed children and adults, students of all ages, UNC faculty and staff, and countless passersby who didn't come for the festival but were drawn in by the crowd and the performances. Each year, the center surveys attendees to assess their reactions as well as the event's effectiveness as a tool for educational outreach. The 2023 survey revealed that respondents were enthusiastic about each aspect of the event, particularly its location at a popular off-campus gathering place: the lawn outside Weaver Street Market (WSM), a food coop that is a local institution, just ten minutes from campus but firmly located in the community rather than a university-affiliated site. The ASC's collaboration with the market was the first UNC public event at the site; its resounding success, and the enthusiasm of both WSM and the center's staff, ensure that further collaborations lie ahead.

Africa Fest has platformed a wide array of performers: Diali Cissokho & Kaira Ba, a kora-led dance band that has performed at all four Africa Fests; poetry by Poet Laureate of Chapel Hill CJ Suitt; and a drum ensemble led by Raleigh-based Congolese musician Pline Mounzeo. Africa Fest has featured keynote addresses from Dr. Motumisi Tawana, South African Consul General in New York, and Carrboro Mayor Damon Seils. It has also incorporated local businesses to extend opportunities to learn about Africa, including the 2023 collaboration with local bookstore The Golden Fig, which featured titles by African authors. ASC has also invited local African food entrepreneurs to offer samples of their products at Africa Fest. Cross-promotion with such businesses builds our audiences and broadens the reach of local small businesses.



Sierra Leone's Tiwaniokay Hunting Masquerade performing at the third Africa Fest on Oct 8, 2023, at Weaver Street Market in Carrboro.

K-5 Digital Learning of Contemporary Africa



In Senegal, members of a cooperative garden project in the town of Palo celebrate along with K-5 teachers Tara Wilson, Leslie Roberts, and Amy Barsanti

In 2021, the African Studies Center received a three-year grant from the Oak Foundation for the K-5 Digital Learning of Contemporary Africa project. This initiative aims to create digital resources for elementary school art, music, and social studies teachers. The project's goals are twofold. The project develops publicly accessible digital lesson plans on various topics that address contemporary Africa through social studies, arts, and music, all designed to meet North Carolina curriculum standards. The project is also compiling a user-friendly, open-source repository of curated social studies, arts, and music content for teachers to adapt to classroom use for other lessons, beyond the lesson plans designed by the ASC team.

The project team includes North Carolina ASC staff, K-5 teachers, UNC faculty experts and administrators, and faculty from UNC's School of Education. The team members traveled to Senegal in the summer of 2022 and then to Ghana in the summer of 2023. Both trips provided opportunities to gather data and visual materials for curriculum development. The trips also provided the teachers, none of whom had previous experience in Africa, with invaluable personal enrichment that informs all of their teaching.

All twenty lesson plans from Senegal have been finalized and are available via the ASC's project website, designed in collaboration with a media specialist and team member from the UNC Libraries. The lesson plans for Ghana are still under development, with an anticipated total of fifteen plans. By prioritizing diverse perspectives, the team has developed teaching tools that can serve as exemplary models for educators striving to enhance the quality and breadth of their instruction in Africa and music, art, and social studies more broadly. In the third year of the Oak Foundation grant, the ASC is disseminating the project through engagement with teachers to pilot the curricula, networking with state- and nationwide education associations, and through local school districts.

The K-5 Digital Learning of Contemporary Africa site houses all the lesson plans as well as further project information: <https://teachingafrica.unc.edu/>

Lessons Learned



ASC board member Suzanne Maman (far left) and colleagues from Carolina for Kibera

Establishing a comprehensive curriculum within the African Studies Center is vital to institutionalizing the wealth of research and knowledge produced over the years. Augmenting funding to support more visiting scholars from the African continent can significantly bolster UNC's reputation as a premier hub for African studies. This will foster more global collaboration and exchange of expertise.

The ASC's commitment to fostering robust connections with the local community facilitated through collaborative research projects, outreach programs, and partnerships with local organizations has been integral to its success in cultivating a deeper appreciation of African cultures and issues within the community.

Embracing technological innovation has played a pivotal role in the increase in outreach and engagement of the ASC's community. Leveraging digital resources, online platforms such as Zoom events, and innovative research methodologies has enriched the study of Africa and facilitated broader participation.

Title VI serves as the central pillar of funding for the center, offering both opportunities and challenges. While meeting the grant's stipulations has been crucial, it has somewhat limited the center's outreach. Despite this, the center has made a significant impact within the university and local community. Although this impact may not be readily evident to a wider audience at the moment, positive changes are underway. The center's proactive approach to diversifying funding, including the successful acquisition of the Oak grant and ongoing efforts to secure additional federal grants, signifies a promising shift. As a result, the center has redefined its mission and broadened its influence, paving the way for even more positive outcomes in the future.

Way Forward



ASC Associate Director, Ada Umenwaliri touring Massalikoul Djinane Mosque in Dakar during a group research trip to Senegal in the summer of 2022

Looking ahead, the ASC is committed to strengthening its role as a pioneer in African Studies by implementing several key strategies. Firstly, the ASC will prioritize securing increased funding to support an expanded network of visiting scholars from Africa, fostering global collaboration and enhancing UNC's prominence as a leading African Studies hub. Strengthening collaborations with African institutions and universities will facilitate knowledge exchange, joint research projects, and student exchange programs, thus expanding the ASC's global reach and impact.

Furthermore, the ASC will further enhance its connection with the local community. It plans to sustain its collaborative research projects, outreach programs, and partnerships with local organizations, fostering a deeper understanding of African cultures and global issues within the community.

To mitigate the limitations imposed by a single funding source, the ASC is actively diversifying its funding portfolio. This shift will enable the center to extend its influence and visibility beyond the university and local community. By leveraging new funding pipelines, the ASC will continue to revise its mission and broaden its reach as a quality source for African Studies education and research. In this next phase, the ASC recognizes the importance of maintaining a dynamic and adaptable approach, continuously evolving to meet the changing needs and demands of the academic landscape. With a commitment to collaboration and innovation, ASC hopes to continue to impact the study of African Studies within the university and beyond.

Acknowledgments



Left to right: Professor Mamaramé Seck of the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, ASC Director Victoria Rovine, and Dr. Ahmadou Aly Mbaye, Rector of the University of Cheikh Anta Diop

This is an amazing time to be teaching and learning about Africa. As I write this, The New York Times has just published an extensive, richly illustrated feature entitled “Old World, Young Africa” (10/29/2023). Introducing his overview of the continent’s growth, creativity, opportunities, and challenges, journalist Declan Walsh declares, “The world is becoming more African.” To this, we would add, “To study Africa is to study the world.” We at the UNC African Studies Center are honored to be the hub for high-quality teaching, research, and outreach on Africa for the state of North Carolina and beyond. This report only begins to describe the many achievements of the center’s staff, its affiliated faculty and students, and the many members of our community who work with us to share their knowledge and to learn from our programs. As director of the ASC, I have many people to thank at Carolina and beyond:

The College of Arts and Sciences, The Office of the Vice Provost for Global Affairs, the Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies, including the African Languages Program, UNC Area Studies Centers, the Oak Foundation, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the many teachers across the state who participate in our programs.

And very special thanks to ASC Associate Director Ada Umenwaliri, ASC Outreach Manager Laura Cox, and Undergraduate Assistant Bohollomonde Yapó. The ASC’s Advisory Board provides invaluable insights and linkages across campus. Past ASC directors Michael Lambert and Emily Burrill, along with past Associate Director Barbara Anderson, laid the groundwork we build upon. Thanks also to Oduenyi Okonkwo, whose design and editorial skills shaped this report.

Dr. Victoria Rovine, Director, African Studies Center