

THE CON VER SAT ION

There is no conversation without you

There is no conversation without...

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Letter from the Chairperson

It is already trite to say how profoundly sobered we all are by the astonishing speed with which the assumptions underpinning the structure of our global society have been swept away by the current pandemic. At the same time, this sharpens our focus anew on the remaining things that we find more or less dependable in our world. These include the institutions of science and research that generate defensible knowledge, and the institutions of the media that provide credible platforms for the circulation of insight and debate.

Our dependence on these in recent weeks and months, occasioned by the pandemic, is unprecedented, and will continue long into the future – not just for solutions and strategies in the face of this disease, but hopefully for some larger adjustments in the values and priorities that order the economies and institutions of society.

Prior to this moment of crisis, we were anxious about a number of contingencies: deepening patterns of inequality, the rise of populism and fake news, the weakening of many credible media institutions, and the threat of climate change, among them. Given this, we must acknowledge again the foresight that gave rise to The Conversation, the platform that brings science and quality journalism into very productive partnership.

More particularly, I would like to celebrate the initiative and passion that has given rise to one of the most ambitious editions of The Conversation – a platform that draws on and speaks to the communities of the African continent. This was a view that appreciated the diversity and complexity of its social and political geography, but also understood its rich interdependencies and the need for ever-deepening dialogue.

Caroline Southey announced her intentions to inaugurate the platform in a trans-continental model, based on an appraisal of the scholarship

and the readership. She identified an able general manager to be the business brains of the project in Alex Storey and they quickly recruited an equally passionate partner in the form of Jabulani Sikhakhane as deputy editor. Soon the team was in place – and they stormed ahead. The rest is now a rich and successful five-year history, with the organisation now securely established in south, east and west Africa, with a steadily growing footprint of contributors and readers, and demonstrating its power with the exponential growth occasioned by the coronavirus crisis.

As Chairperson of the Board, I've been delighted to have a privileged ringside seat for the launch of The Conversation Africa, for its swift adoption by the scholarly community, for a rapidly growing continental and global audience. The task of steering the governance of TC Africa has been straightforward and entirely engrossing.

I've relished every new development crafted by Caroline and her team, every fresh victory they have won in a sometimes challenging terrain.

I've relied heavily on the management of TC Africa, and on my fellow Board Members, and it has been exhilarating teamwork at every turn.

As TC Africa prepares for its next five-year phase of adventure and accomplishment, I am grateful for the very rewarding tenure that I have savoured as Chair, and look forward hugely to the successes of TC Africa long into the future.

Rob Moore

Chairman



From small beginnings to a pan-African reach

The chief economics writer of the Financial Times submitted an article to the desk editor whose job it was to review and edit it for publication. After a brief review, the editor told the chief economics writer: "I don't understand what this means." To which the chief economics writer replied: "This article was written for three people and you aren't one of them."

This story was told to young aspirant copy editors in the paper's newsroom in the early 1980s. It was recounted as a lesson about outmoded thinking – the arrogant view that economics was only for the privileged few; and that big men with big minds didn't have to explain their subject matter in a manner that an average reader could understand. We were encouraged to ask all writers to explain what they meant, and to persist until articles had been edited to the point of being accessible to ordinary people – like ourselves. Copy editors were, if you like, defenders of the public against articles that were written for three readers.

The lesson holds true for science too. By science I mean the full gamut of academic endeavour. Like economics, science is a matter of life and death. This stark truth has hit home during the most recent coronavirus pandemic. Yet for far too long much of the work and knowledge of academics in all disciplines remained out of the reach of ordinary people. And of people who make life and death decisions.

This gulf has begun to narrow in recent years.

Scientists are highly specialised, and to get to the top of their game they must use the language of their specialisation. But this language becomes a barrier to sharing their knowledge with the public. The ability to share this knowledge has also been made more difficult as newsrooms have fired their specialist writers to cope with collapsing revenues.

The result has been a failure to share information in time frames that make a difference. The danger is that the void is quickly and easily filled by unsupported suppositions and theories which are often used to justify bad decisions.

What has been missing has been a 'translation' service to make erudite scholarship accessible.



The Conversation Africa launches on May 7, 2015; Scientists at the Pasteur Institute in Dakar, Senegal. (SEYLOU/AFP/Getty Images); Scientists at the University of Lomé, in the capital of Togo. (Stephan Gladieu/ World Bank/Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND)

That has begun to happen. Just as the culture of the Financial Times changed, the environment around science has shifted.

Scientists are catching on to the power of communicating what they know clearly and simply. But, as many have discovered, it's not easy.

The arrival of different media approaches helped this transition. Media ventures like The Conversation were set up to make science more accessible, more interesting, and more rewarding to read.

Writing clearly and simply is much harder to do than using technical terminology. And there are still some scientists who believe that many policy makers and ordinary people know – or should know – what all the technical terms mean. They do not. A good economist has no idea how a virus works. Nor does a top rate epidemiologist understand the first thing about fiscal and monetary policy.

What The Conversation has shown, in spades, is that if we can translate the bits that people don't understand, and provide a safe platform and process to unpack the deep knowledge of academics, people will come back for more.

This has been the gratifying lesson since the inception of The Conversation Africa five years ago. The fourth site in The Conversation constellation to be launched after Australia, the UK and the US, the Africa edition has developed into a formidable media presence on the continent.

From small beginnings – an office of six in Johannesburg – The Conversation Africa now has a team of 21 spanning five countries in the east, west and south. Over 3,500 academics and researchers have published nearly 5,500 articles. Contributions have come from 160 universities and research institutions on the continent.

The Conversation's simple model has been to twin the expertise of academics with the editing skills of journalists. The outcome has been electric, with demand for the articles published every day exceeding all expectations. The Conversation publishes under a Creative Commons licence. The result has been that over 90% of the articles posted daily over the past five years have been taken up by media outlets across the world – 650 in all.

This demand has both negative and positive underpinnings. The negative is that media outlets need free material given the parlous state of their newsrooms. The positive driver, however, is that the articles are in demand because they are authored by academics who are specialists in their field and can be trusted. And because complex ideas are presented as easy reads.

Articles about complex issues have, on numerous occasions, made it to the list of best reads on any given day. Ranking in the top best read articles on the site are: Seven hard facts we all need to swallow about antibiotics (published four years ago); The all-in-one solution to sexual health is on its way; Academics can change the world – if they stop talking only to their peers (both published two years ago); and Scientists are still searching for the source of COVID-19: why it matters (published a month ago).

There were many who were deeply sceptical of The Conversation Africa ever getting off the ground when the idea was first mooted. The most common ripostes were: academics on the continent aren't interested in sharing their knowledge unless it's for money; you'll never get the financial backing; it's too hard.

The Conversation Africa has proved the naysayers wrong. Academics have been generous with their knowledge and their patience during the editing process. Academic institutions have supported the venture financially and in kind. And donors keen on ensuring that expert knowledge reaches policy makers and the public have backed us again and again.

The Conversation Africa's team makes the impossible possible – every day. They can rightfully claim to be helping to find solutions to old and new problems. What they do shows that it's possible to confound bad science and to counter the flood of misinformation and disinformation that's the lifeblood of bad governance and bad policies.

Caroline Southey

Editor





COVID-19 pandemic presented The Conversation Africa with some big tests

The outbreak of COVID-19 proved to be a test of The Conversation Africa in many respects.

First, it gave The Conversation Africa an opportunity to test its ability to coordinate coverage across all seven of the topic areas that the site covers and provide coverage across the continent. This was the first time that one issue straddled all topics and the entire continent.

Second, it tested The Conversation Africa's ability to coordinate its operations remotely on a large scale. From inception, the Johannesburg team had always operated from a central venue, and from there worked with teams in Nairobi, then Senegal, Ghana and later Lagos. For the first time, the entire Johannesburg team had to work away from the office. On both counts, The Conversation Africa did well. Yes, there were teething problems here and there, but overall the coverage has been superb.

By meeting these challenges head-on, The Conversation Africa managed to pull off coverage that helped readers gain better insights into the pandemic as well as the various measures governments across the continent put in place to stem the pandemic's tide. Our authors too responded positively, often making The Conversation Africa their first port of call. After universities and other institutions shut down because of lockdowns introduced by governments, authors swamped The Conversation Africa with offers of copy. This proved to be yet another test of The Conversation Africa team's capacity and capability to assess story ideas, review copy and edit on a scale the team has never done before.

In summary, The Conversation Africa's contribution to COVID-19 coverage across the continent was in offering:

- a) An opportunity to a wide network of experts, both on the continent and overseas, to provide great coverage of the health and medicine, science and technology, politics, education and economic aspects of COVID-19 and the measures introduced by governments to "flatten its curve".
- b) An opportunity for scientists and other experts to demonstrate the value of evidence-based policymaking, in particular by making such evidence easily accessible to the public.

Jabulani Sikhakhane

Deputy Editor

People wear face masks as they queue for aid in Zandspruit informal settlement, north of Johannesburg, South Africa. (Phill Magakoe/AFP via Getty Images)



Amplifying the voice of African scholars

There is an African proverb that says: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Leveraging the power of collaboration and partnerships for mutual good is at the core of our model and way of working. We initially launched as a pilot project in May 2015, with the commitment and endorsement of 21 universities in seven countries in Africa, all of which saw our vision and shared our mission to increase the visibility of African scholarship and research.



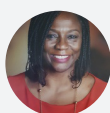
TC Africa staff with Stellenbosch University academic Francis Cleophas, acknowledged at the university's Research Awards in 2019 for the most contributions from the institution in 2018.

University of Ibadan Research Fellow Kudus Adebayo on the steps of the Institute of African Studies.

"Sharing research with the public is increasingly critical. TC Africa helps to project the brain of Africa onto the global platform. This has certainly been true for me. I hope more researchers write for TC Africa. It's a great platform for your voice to be heard."

Professor Folasade Ogunsola

University of Lagos, Nigeria



"Often, as scientists we fear that journalists will misinterpret our work. This was not the case with The Conversation Africa's editor who took my work and expertly crafted it into an article. Such an easy process – only a matter of days with excellent editing."

Dr Janet Viljoen

Rhodes University



"The right conversations have the power to change the world and the voice of African academics within these conversations is vital. The Conversation Africa has provided an accessible, innovative platform for the voice of academics to be heard. It has allowed valuable and impactful research to gain greater traction and the appreciation of broader audiences. In the context of the National Research Foundation's commitment to strengthening the relationship between science and society, the impact of The Conversation Africa is very significant and it is contributing positively to raising the profile and impact of African research and researchers."

Dr Molapo Qhobela

Chief Executive Officer, National Research Foundation



Five years on, we are steadily growing in our pan-African mission to amplify the voices of African scholars. We have published academics from 174 universities in 28 African countries. This is indeed a shared success as we could not have achieved it without all our university and research sector partners.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our host institutions: the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, the Nigerian Academy of Science in Lagos and the African Population and Health Research Centre in Nairobi.

We are especially thankful for our funding university partners to date: the University of Cape Town, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, Rhodes University, the University of the Western Cape, SACEMA, the University of Johannesburg, the University of South Africa, and the University of KwaZulu Natal.

As part of our partnership agreements, funding universities receive a suite of partner services and benefits that include science communication training workshops for academics and researchers. These partners also have access to institutional metrics and impact reports that reflect the number of articles published per institution, readership, the geographic location of readers and details of media outlets republishing the content as well as social media engagement. Increasingly these metrics matter and can be used to demonstrate public engagement, research uptake and the wider societal impact of scholarship.

In author surveys we have conducted, many of our authors have told us that publishing with The Conversation drives readers to their scholarly articles and has frequently led to further research collaborations with peers, invitations to advise policy makers and engagements with research users in sometimes unexpected yet meaningful ways.

As we look ahead to the next five years, we are excited to do more with our partners, to deepen and extend our relationships, and to build new partnerships across the continent.

Pfungwa Nyamukachi

Strategic Partnerships Manager



Authors taste real world impact



"I have noted your very visible footprints in Kenya, congratulations! I am able to see the stats and it is amazing how widely my article has been read. My h-index (rating of academic outputs in journals) has just increased by close to 5 points since last week. I believe the article has had some impact and contribution."

Prof. Vincent O. Onywera

Kenyatta University, Kenya



"I published this piece, Academics can change the world – if they stop talking only to their peers, in March 2016. It's been read over 210,000 times and shared 164,000 times on Facebook and 7,200 times on Twitter. For some reason, it goes viral at least once a year."

Dr. Savo Heleta

Nelson Mandela University



"The Conversation brings your articles closer to everyone in the world. This enhances your image in the profession. Publishing for The Conversation also comes with some prestige among colleagues and also increases your newspaper publication articles for your promotion to the next level."

**Dr Alexander Diani
Kofi Preko**

University of Professional Studies,
Ghana



In the last five years, over 3,500 academics and researchers have published nearly 5,500 articles. Contributions have come from 174 universities and research institutions on the continent.



“I’ve published 23 articles in The Conversation. Initially my University didn’t take much notice. They were more interested in subsidy-generating articles in academic journals. Gradually they noticed the exposure the University gets in the press, when an article is republished and I get interviewed on radio or TV as a direct consequence of a Conversation article, is the best advertising they can generate. I recently submitted an application for evaluation by the National Research Foundation, which relies to a considerable degree on the impact a scientist has in a circle of peers and in broader societal debates. I used my output in The Conversation and the resulting media appearances as a key factor arguing my case.”

Hartmut Winkler

Rhodes University



“I have really enjoyed working with TC Africa. I started as a PhD student and it gave me an opportunity to publish my work on a forum where fellow researchers and academics can access it. It has been very rewarding for me both personally and academically.”

Zakeera Docrat

Rhodes University, South Africa



“Publishing in The Conversation Africa has helped me gain more research visibility. I have learnt that scientists must find a way to disseminate scientific findings in simpler language and fewer words so that it can be understood by policymakers and opinion leaders, who may not necessarily be scientists.”

Emmanuel Akindele

Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife, Nigeria



Workshops and awards help academics shine



Staff from The Conversation Africa with University of South Africa academics at the institution's Research Awards; Academics participate in a Writing for The Conversation Africa workshop; Stellenbosch University academic Marina Joubert addresses students at the Centre for Biomedical TB Research's Science Communication Awards.



The success of The Conversation Africa pivots on the relationship between its editors and the academics who pen the articles.

To strengthen and deepen these relationships, we run workshops for academics on how to write for a general audience. And we've established competitions and awards with institutions keen to get young academics writing.

Two free workshops run every year for universities that fund or host TC Africa. Other institutions can get workshops at a fee. The half day workshops of up to 25 academics give editors a chance to take academics through the basics of writing in a more journalistic style without the pressure of deadlines. Academics and editors share skills and get to know one another.



The workshops help academics to look at their research through a different lens and find new ways to communicate it.

The key questions they are invited to engage with are: why does your research matter? What makes it significant? And why should people care about it?

TC Africa has hosted well over 500 academics in South Africa, Nairobi and Accra. Workshops for academics in Nigeria are also on the cards.

The other initiative that helps TC Africa connect with academics is the various awards that have been established. The first Science Communication Award was launched in 2018 in partnership with the Centre for Invasion Biology – a Centre of Excellence in South Africa under the National Research Foundation and the Department of Science and Innovation.

The centre invited Masters and PhD students to write about their research. The best entries were judged by a team of TC Africa editors.

Since then five more science communication awards have been hosted with the Centre of Excellence for Biomedical TB Research, the South African Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis, the Centre of Excellence in Human Development, the Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology and the AIDS research centre CAPRISA.

Prizes are provided by the centres. The winning entries from PhD candidates are edited and published on the TC Africa site.

Last year, two more awards were initiated: one for the author who has contributed the most articles in a year and the other for the author whose article has been read the most.

To date we have presented awards at Stellenbosch University and the University of South Africa. Both award ceremonies provided impetus to encourage other institutions to follow suit.

Candice Bailey

Development Projects Manager



The Conversation Africa: a dream made real by donor partners

The Conversation Africa's remarkable accomplishments since its launch five years ago are largely due to the generous support of its donors. Our sustainability journey has been different to many of our sister sites which operate in environments that have better resourced higher education sectors. As a result, The Conversation Africa set out to build a network of support that spans local and international donors as well as universities and research houses able to offer financial support as well as support in kind.

Our journey began in 2014 when the National Research Foundation, a research body funded by the South African government, partnered with us, given their focus on supporting and promoting science communication and engagement, and awarded us our initial start up funding for 2015. Since then, we have enjoyed the NRF's unstinting backing. This has come in the form of support grants, as well as guidance and insight into the higher education and research sector on the continent. The Foundation has also included us in multiple events and activities as a media partner, and gifted us with their time, advice and mentorship. The NRF's support proved catalytic in getting The Conversation Africa off the ground.

The Conversation Africa has also received support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation since our inception through funding and technical assistance for impact measurement and evaluation. It has also introduced us to other media organisations doing similar work, included us in events and supported convenings and other related activities that have presented us with opportunities for learning and reflection.

The Carnegie Corporation of New York has worked with The Conversation Africa since 2016. It currently funds our work towards covering issues relating to peacebuilding in Africa as part of its Bridging the Gap between academic and policy communities programme.

In 2019, the Andrew W Mellon Foundation came on board for a three-year grant to support The Conversation Africa in bringing arts and humanities scholarship in Africa to the public.

A number of other donors have championed and supported us over the last five years. These have included Barclays Africa, which funded the first three years of our technology costs; The John S and James L Knight Foundation, which provided start up funding for organisational



management activities; and Yellowwoods, which provided seed funding in our first year and then further support in our third year of operations. The Community Media Fund, a programme of the Bloomberg Media Initiative in Africa and the Ford Foundation, funded our business and economy work for one year with a specific focus on reaching communities in Kenya and South Africa.

The Conversation Africa is exceptionally fortunate to have donors that are interested in, and work with us to forge deep and lasting partnerships, towards achieving common goals. We are enormously grateful for their support, both financial and in kind. We could not do what we do without them.

Alex Storey

General Manager



The Conversation Africa has held two partnership events, a breakfast lecture with the University of Pretoria as well as a public lecture with the African Population Health Research Centre and the Mawazo Institute in Kenya.

Regions

The view from the East

East Africa popped up on The Conversation world map exactly four years ago. It's hard to believe now that back then few here were aware of the platform and hardly any academics from the region had ventured into the vibrant exchange of knowledge.

On the face of it, the team assembled to put East Africa firmly on the map had an easy task. Go out to the academy, unveil the irresistible proposition and wait for the copy to clog the inboxes. In practice, as editor Caroline Southey had warned time and again, it was not as easy as it looked.

Little wonder that I still recall as if it were yesterday the help and encouragement from Johannesburg colleagues more hardened by failure.

After four years at it, the landscape has changed quite remarkably. None is more refreshing than the affirmation that comes when you mention "The Conversation": The nodding of heads has replaced the blank faraway look. The change was painfully slow: article by article, university by university, territory after territory – and friendships struck where hope had previously been abandoned.

The team in East Africa is especially proud that, after a halting start, their work is now regularly republished by established media houses. And the number of East Africans logging into The Conversation every day is a healthy component of the overall footprint. This is credit to the work of commissioning editors and the audience development leader.

Yet we're often reminded that we have still far to go. East Africa is a huge territory that traditionally denotes Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan and Somalia. But we also cover Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country, Eritrea, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sudan, Central African Republic and Malawi.

We're heartened that we have authors spread out across all these countries. But we know we have a lot left to do to strengthen our networks, to deepen our relationships with the academy and to meet the expectations of the audience – and policy makers – for whom all this ultimately matters most.

Julius Maina

Regional Editor East Africa



"At first it was a bit challenging breaking down scientific content to make it digestible to a lay audience while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the message. But the TC team is very supportive and quick."

Abdhalah Ziraba

APHRC, Kenya



"Being a well-respected science communication outlet has meant that those coming across my articles in The Conversation can trust my expertise. It has been particularly helpful to expose me to continental and global scholarly networks that I would never have had access to otherwise."

Connie Nshemereirwe

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), Uganda



"The editorial work on any article is rigorous, balanced and professional and makes a contributor satisfied and proud of the final product. More grease to the elbows of the managers of this project. Congratulations!"

Prof. Tijjani Naniya

Bayero University, Nigeria



The future beckons for West Africa

From the beginning in 2015, it was clear that a Conversation Africa without a strong presence in West Africa was unthinkable.

This is because of the depth of knowledge and contributions waiting to be tapped from academics in Nigeria, the continent's largest economy and home to black Africa's most populous nation, as well as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal and other parts of the sub-region.

It did not take long for this to be established. The third article about Nigeria published on The Conversation Africa website was the first to be written by a Nigerian academic based in Nigeria. Authored by Professor Folasade Ogunsola, now Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos, the article, published on May 13, 2015, was about how Nigeria beat the Ebola virus in three months. It attracted 26,812 readers on the website.

This sort of readership not only signposted the importance and relevance of the topic. It also spoke about the imperatives of having an expert voice, from the region, on the subject.

For a website, this was a big number. It was a taste of things to come. From that point on, The Conversation Africa has grown in leaps and bounds in West Africa, attracting nearly 6 million reads through about 517 published articles written by no fewer than 508 academics, whose works have also attracted no fewer than 1,387 comments.

For authors, the comments from non-specialist readers have been the most rewarding. Olawale Emmanuel Olayide, a research fellow and lecturer at the University of Ibadan, for instance, says, "I enjoy the comments, contributions, feedback section of the online publication." Tolu Olarewaju, an economics lecturer, says "writing for TC Africa has been a fantastic opportunity to engage with the wider community to underscore important issues that have been beneficial to the citizenry and policy-makers."

Olayide adds, "It is interesting to communicate scientific research to non-scientific audiences without losing the essence of the science in the communication." Olarewaju says



"the fact that TC Africa gets expert opinion from academics and researchers restores credibility to the media in the modern era."

Such comments are testaments to the hard work and diligence of our colleagues in different parts of the continent who ensured that West Africa was never left behind even at a time when the region didn't have a team and office.

By early 2020, The Conversation Africa had expanded its operations in the sub-region with an office in Lagos, Nigeria. Thanks to the Nigerian Academy of Science and the University of Lagos, The Conversation Africa's presence in Lagos supports Nigeria as well as the operations of the group in Ghana and Senegal and the sub-region.

Today, this team is already proving its worth. The number and quality of West African stories is rising, republication of articles is picking up and The Conversation is becoming better known across campuses in the region.

Adejuwon Soyinka

Regional Editor West Africa



The busy streets of Lagos, Nigeria Reuters/Juda Ngwenya

Collaboration means Francophone Africa is being featured for the first time



The Francophone project, a collaboration between The Conversation Africa and The Conversation France, was launched almost a year ago. This was a natural progression for The Conversation Africa as we expanded across the African continent with the aim of covering more regions, reaching more academics and audiences.

There are 29 African countries in which French is the official language. And of the 300 million French speakers around the world, 44% live in sub-Saharan Africa. Data shows that this figure could be as high as 85% by 2050. It is important that we cover French-speaking countries.

Our dedicated editors have worked with academics from several Francophone countries, providing them with a wider audience for their research and opening up the region to rich academic analysis. We've also provided for translations, which means

that this knowledge can now be unlocked and is accessible to others on the continent or, at times, even non-French speakers within the same country.

Since our launch, we've had a fantastic year of coverage, with in-depth analysis of some monumental geopolitical shifts. This included the decision by eight Francophone states to delink their common currency from France, the growth of terrorism in the Sahel region and Cameroon's protracted "Anglophone" crisis.

We look forward to the continued growth of this division, providing Francophone academics with a platform that can unlock their knowledge and giving the public insights into some of society's greatest challenges.

Moina Spooner

Commissioning Editor:
East and Francophone Africa



Pushing on with Pasha: joining the smart journalism stream

In 2019 The Conversation Africa added a weekly podcast to its offerings. Through Pasha – which means “to inform” in Swahili – we bring our listeners some of the best research from academics across the continent.

Pasha initially focused on four themes: public health, women and girls, science and innovation for development and agriculture. In our early days we featured podcasts on car-free days in Nairobi, what happens to the body when a person gets Ebola, how to fight malaria with drones and the social stigma that Ghanaian women face.

We've since evolved and some of our more recent podcasts look at what happens when you donate your body to research, the history of drugs in southern Africa and gender inequality in education systems.

So far we have had over 5,000 listeners globally. The most popular podcasts so far have been on whether South Africa will run out of food in the COVID-19 pandemic and the history of drugs in southern Africa. We've had over 4,000 downloads and the most downloaded podcast (137 times) is about Rwanda's health systems. In second place is a podcast on the Fourth Industrial Revolution in South Africa.

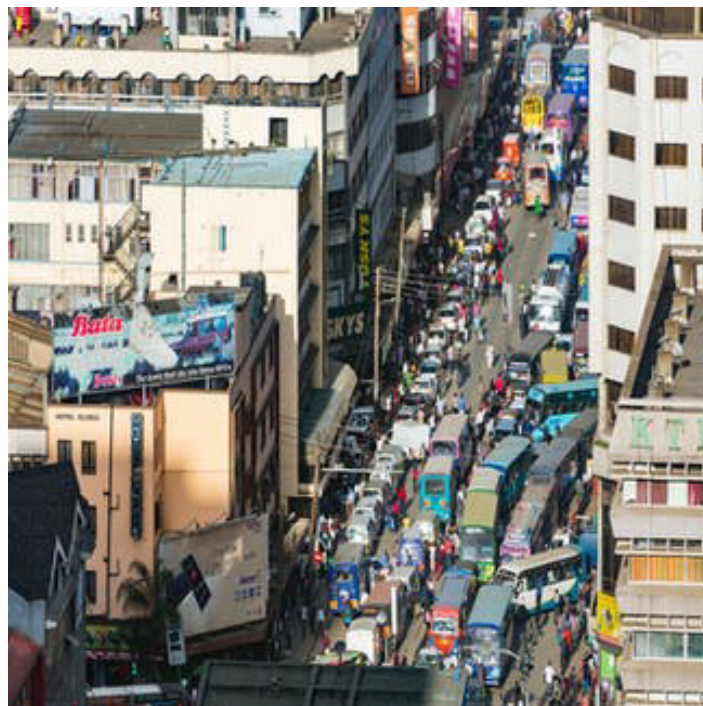
Our podcasts have also provided valuable insights into the COVID-19 pandemic, such as how far we are from a vaccine, and an overview of the coronavirus situation in Nigeria.

In the pipeline, we're planning a series on what African countries have learnt from each other in dealing with climate risks.

It's been a fun ride and we thank our audience for giving us their ears for the 64 episodes of Pasha.

Ozayr Patel

Digital Editor



Nairobi traffic (IndustryAndTravel/Shutterstock); A closeup of a green maize plant (Victoria Field/Shutterstock)

Across: Senegalese migrants protest against racism and violence. Eugenio Marongiu/Shutterstock;

Media outlets snap up articles written by experts

Every article or podcast published on The Conversation Africa is free for all to share under Creative Commons – and we’ve become a go-to source for media outlets for credible, timely, evidence-based expertise, both online and in print. The Conversation is a useful resource for the media, and our authors form a rich pool of experts whom journalists can reach out to for follow-up stories or interviews.

More than 650 outlets globally publish our content, reaching wide, influential audiences through publishers. Africa-wide publications like Quartz Africa and This is Africa; The Guardian, Punch and Premium Times in Nigeria; Modern Ghana and Daily Graphic in Ghana; The Star, The Standard and Daily Nation in Kenya; and News24, Mail & Guardian and Sowetan in South Africa are just a few of the media outlets across the African continent that republish our content. While the republishing network in East and West Africa has increased significantly in the last two

years, overall the number of outlets using The Conversation Africa content grows every day.

Articles published by The Conversation Africa are also featured on websites of sister editions, including Australia, the UK, the US, France, Indonesia, Canada and Spain, giving authors a global mix of readers.

Our material has been republished in over 25 countries in Africa, and in more than five languages including English, French, Portuguese, Afrikaans and Kiswahili. Collectively, articles by The Conversation's global network are being republished in 94 countries and over 25 languages.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our valued network of republishers for choosing us to be your source of evidence-based content. We couldn't have reached this milestone without you. Thank you.

Judy Nguta

Audience Development Manager





"The Conversation Africa's content is extremely rich, very deep and very topical. The articles attract rave reviews as it enables academia to publish also to the general audience, something that should be a major objective to academia."

Dr Hannington Gaya

Editor, Business Monthly (Kenya)

"Content from The Conversation has enhanced not only our content base but the quality of our readers. The phone calls and the positive feedback from our ardent readers suggests that readers are finding interest in such content."

Bright Adamson

Modern Ghana (Ghana)



"The Conversation has been an incredible addition to the public discourse in South Africa. Its access to experts in a broad range of academic fields, both locally and internationally, has added immense depth to our ability to explain issues of importance to our readers. It gives readers access to knowledge in a way that is digestible and, in turn, allows academic research to reach the appropriate eyes and ears to effect real change."

Alet Law

News24 (South Africa)

"We have been able to enrich our platform with quality and well researched academic content for areas or beats we do not have adequate coverage. The morning newsletters from The Conversation make it easy to quickly identify content we need to republish."

Richard Akinwumi

Premium Times (Nigeria)



New media setting the tone in Kenya. (Siegfried Modola/ Reuters); Gautrain travellers enjoy the papers on the train in Johannesburg (Reuters); Some African journalists are concerned that foreign funders may influence what they cover and how. (EPA-EFE/Jayden Joshua)

Team

One team, six countries, specialist skills



Caroline Southey
Editor



Alex Storey
General Manager



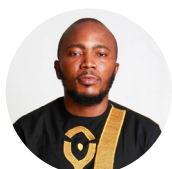
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