Exploring the African Narrative
Research Fellowship Program for Emerging Scholars
Date: 12 October 2020
Call for Applicants

Thank you for applying to the Africa No Filter Research Fellowship program for emerging scholars. Priority will be given to African scholars from African countries who are currently undertaking a PhD or a Post-doc, or those who have been in junior academic posts for less than 3 years. In addition:

i. Applicants should be based at a recognized academic institute.
ii. Preference will be given scholars who have experience in line with the research program and/or content analysis skills. Examples include scholars in media/communication/journalism studies, filmmaking, photography, literature, visual arts, music, and scholars of development communication.

About Africa No Filter
ANF is a donor collaborative funded by Ford Foundation, Bloomberg, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Luminate, Open Society Foundations, Comic Relief and the Hilton Foundation. We support the development of nuanced stories that shift existing, stereotypical narratives about Africa through research, grant making and advocacy. ANF’s goal over time is to leave an empowered narrative change ecosystem and an informed community of storytellers who work more deliberately to change harmful narratives about Africa.

Why we are launching this fellowship
Narratives about Africa are characterized by persistently negative stories and stereotypes that focus more on challenges and less on progress. As a result, how Africans’ view themselves and how we are viewed by others is informed by stereotypical and outdated views. There is a
need to make narrative evidence-based and relevant to the African conversations around investment in Africa, youth unemployment, migration, development, and other big issues African countries are dealing with.

Although some research has looked at African narratives in mainstream media in the UK and US, there is very little available from within the continent, and in other regions of the world. The ANF Emerging Scholars Fellowship program aims to address this shortage of research about Africa by African scholars by investigating and unpacking narratives about Africa.

About the fellowship
Research Fellows will undertake a Content Analysis exercise (which could be a general content analysis, a frame analysis, or a discourse analysis) for a prescribed period. Researchers will clarify which narratives are harmful and which are helpful, then select one option from the list below to investigate:

What are the prevailing stories and resulting narratives about Africa in 2018-2020?

i. In mainstream media - radio, print, online, television in Africa. These should be the mainstream media in each country with the largest footprint.

ii. Across radio, print, online and television in at least two of the following countries/regions: China, India, United Arab Emirates, and Europe.

iii. On social media platforms and by influencers within youthful mediums, e.g. TikTok and Instagram vs. mediums with diverse audiences e.g. Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

iv. Being depicted through artistic representations, for example photography, visual art, literature and poetry produced within a specified period.

v. On pop culture mediums including music videos, television entertainment shows, and African films produced or presented in a specified period.

vi. In development communications from development organizations, e.g. donors, development agencies, international or local NGOs, or foundations.

vii. On knowledge platforms like Wikipedia or search questions on platforms like Google.

viii. In educational content in Africa e.g. textbooks, curriculums.

Comparative Narratives

ix. Since globally, the media is often accused of only putting out ‘negative news’, can we establish if news about Africa is particularly negative, or on a par with other regions? For comparison, what are the prevailing stories and resulting narratives about China in global media and what counter narratives are becoming evident?

*Consideration will be given to researchers with new relevant ideas worth exploring
This research will feed into ANF advocacy and will inform other tools we are developing, i.e:

i. A narrative index with indicators for a bi-annual assessment and ranking of each African country’s media narratives on other African countries.

ii. A tool for ongoing in-depth analysis of narratives.

**Priority countries for your research**
ANF priority countries include: Central Africa (DRC); East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda); North Africa (Egypt, Algeria, Morocco); Southern Africa (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola); West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire)
International: US, France, UK, China, India, and United Arab Emirates.
We expect **at least a 2-country study across regions**.

**What to expect from the fellowship**
Apart from the funds you will receive, we are offering the following mentorship program:

- An initiation workshop, which will include comprehensive feedback from leading academics on your proposal, including advice on literature reviews and methodology.
- Guided monthly meetings with other Fellows to share and peer review your work with one of the Advisory Committee members.
- As applicable, shared resources for literature review.
- A writing workshop with leading academics.
- Comprehensive feedback from leading academics on your draft report and on the preparation of a journal article following the publication of the report.
- Growing your academic and media profile, through various dissemination activities (listed below).

**Research dissemination**
Research Fellows will be required to disseminate in a number of ways, with the support of Africa No Filter, and will include:

- Research report, including an executive summary.
- Highlights version of the report for a compilation book on the subject.
- Submission of paper to academic journal/s (you will continue to notify Africa No Filter of the publication progress at each stage, even after the fellowship has ended, as publication may take 1-2 years).
- Articles, OpEds, blog posts and social media posts.
- Media interviews.
• Digital/in person events (e.g. webinars, conferences, seminars, roundtables) to target various stakeholder groups e.g. Academics, African Institutions, mainstream and alternative media, influencers and artists.

**What we are looking for**

Chosen fellows should be clear about how they conceptualise the research resulting in changing the African narrative, what qualifies them for the research, and how they see the programme developing their expertise.

**How to apply**

Read the proposal tips. Fill in the proposal form and provide the following documents:

i. A cover letter outlining your interest in the project and highlighting your key strengths.
ii. A 2-3 page CV with two contactable academic references, outlining your academic qualifications and relevant research experience, as well as any applicable professional background.
iii. A list of publications and other outputs.
iv. Proof of registration/employment at a recognized academic institution.
v. Proof of African nationality (e.g. certified copy of birth certificate/passport/identity document).

Applications must be submitted by **Friday 13 November 2020**. The Fellowship will be granted in **December 2020**, to be completed by **31 July 2021**.