

Africa Zooms Ahead: African-Led Development, African Solutions to African Challenges - A virtual study abroad

Instructors: The Honorable Gebreselassie Tesfamichael (gtesfami@gmu.edu), Carol Pineau (cpineau@gmu.edu), Senior Fellows, and Michal McElwain Malur (mmcelwai@gmu.edu) of the Schar School of Policy and Government

Certificate Program, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

This is an online class. The following are the dates of the class, times are EST:

- Saturday, January 14, 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm
- Sunday, January 15, 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm
- Saturday, February 11, 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm
- Saturday, March 4, 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm

Program

Students in this virtual study abroad will have an unprecedented opportunity to hear TED-style talks from top African thought leaders and visionaries, including senior policy makers, academics, cultural leaders, innovators, artists and activists, and more. The program will allow participants to hear first-hand about the vast changes happening throughout Africa and to truly understand African-led development from an African perspective.

- Hear from leaders in government, private sector, and African institutions on the sweeping African-led developments that will not only transform African nations but could create major changes in Africa's place in the globalized world.
- See the future of Africa through the eyes of young Africans, from activists to innovators and entrepreneurs, who are modernizing Africa at a rapid pace.
- Experience modern African culture through exchanges with African artists, writers, filmmakers, and others, and understand the political and economic contribution of the African creative economy.
- Compare and contrast African-led development and political views with international development norms and understand the political underpinnings of people-based development.

The following are some of the speakers from past sessions:

- Hippolyte Fofack, Chief Economist, Afreximbank
- Zouera Youssoufou, CEO, Dangote Foundation
- Dr. John Nkengasong, Director, Africa CDC
- Alain Ebobissé, CEO, Africa50
- Abdu Mukhtar, Director of Industrialization, AfDB
- Dr. Usta Kaitesi, CEO, Rwanda Governance Board
- Omosalewa Adeyemi, VP, Flutterwave

- Sanjeev Gupta, Executive Director, African Finance Corporation
- Juliet Anammah, CEO, Jumia
- Tope Oshin, top grossing Nollywood film director, Nigeria

In looking at African-led development, it is important to understand how we got to a point where a country leading its own development becomes newsworthy. Why don't we talk about American-led development, European-led development, or even Brazilian or Chinese-led development? Narratives impact development. Portraying a country as needing help or constantly showing stories of foreigners as saviors has serious economic consequences, as it is difficult to attract investment, but it also affects individuals and how they feel about their country and government. We look at how racism and preconceived notions has driven international development policy.

While Africa is made up of 54 countries, each with their unique cultures, languages, political systems and more, the continent is coming together in ways that even 10 years ago seemed beyond the realm of possibilities. Today, all but one African country has signed on to the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), making Africa the largest trading block in the world. African multi-lateral institutions, such as the African Development Bank, African Export-Import Bank, African Union, African Center for Disease Control, and others are gaining in stature and influence. A traditional study abroad course could never visit all of Africa, but students in this special virtual program can “tour” the continent, learning and engaging with Africans leading the charge to see how the drive for “African solutions to African challenges” is playing out across this complex and fascinating continent.

Learning Objectives

This course provides an opportunity for students to develop their own research topics and integrate their academic interests and is designed to enable students to:

- Identify significant aspects of true people-based development
- Discuss the concept of “African-led development” with careful attention to its political, economic, and cultural implications
- Understand key historical dynamics that have shaped African development and its relationship to the traditional development partners.
- Compare and contrast African-led initiatives across the continent
- Compose insightful commentaries on their experiences in the diverse arenas that define development in modern Africa.
- Recognize the narrative gap on development between Africa and the traditional development partners
- Integrate concepts of African-led and human-centered development with their own development work

Itinerary

This virtual study abroad program will include a mix of:

- Visits via zoom with well-known African visionaries who are leading transformative initiatives across the continent, for them to discuss their work and Q&A with students

- Debriefing sessions after each virtual visit to discuss the initiative and broaden the scope to look at related issues and other programs throughout the continent
- Cultural exchanges with small groups of young African activists, innovators, entrepreneurs, artists, writers, filmmakers, and others.
- Introductory lecture and wrap-up with a development expert who was one of the early architects of African-led development.

Suggested Reading

This course is primarily focused on the experiential learning of hearing from African trailblazers and understanding what is happening in Africa today. Before each session there will be suggested short readings noted. These will include excerpts, articles, videos, bios for speakers, etc., that will relate to each session's topic and speaker. For students interested in delving further into the topic, the following are optional readings.

- *Know the Beginning Well: An Inside Journey Through Five Decades of Development*, by K.Y. Amoako, 2020.
- *Sweet Talk: Paternalism and Collective Action in North-South Trade Negotiations*, by JP Singh, 2017
- *The Bright Continent, Breaking Rules and Making Change in Modern Africa*, by Dayo Olopade, 2014.

Course Requirements

The following are the requirements for a certificate of completion:

- **Participation in class sessions**
- **Group presentation: Due March 30, 2023 (or day before final session)**
Students will work in small groups to create a presentation (10 minutes) focusing on a specific development challenge discussed during the course and explain multiple African-led solutions from across the continent that are aimed at addressing that issue.

Instructor Bios

The Honorable Gebreselassie Tesfamichael is the former Minister of Finance and Development of Eritrea, where he oversaw the formation of the country's National Development Program. During his tenure as Minister of Finance, Eritrea had Africa's fastest growing economy. He later was appointed Advisor to the Executive Directors Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), addressing the needs and concerns of the 21 African countries in the Africa 1 Group constituency. He also served in East Timor as the Chief Advisor to the Planning Commission to help develop the nation's first post-independence National Development Plan and he conducted a world-wide assessment of development in conflict countries for the World Bank. Mr. Tesfamichael is one of the few development and reconstruction experts working today who has first-hand experience as a frontline combatant, giving him an intimate understanding of the military, political and social aspects of conflict and development. Mr. Tesfamichael also has

direct diplomatic experience, having served in the external relations department of Eritrea and participating in peace negotiations. It is this vast range of experiences at all levels, coupled with his work with most of the major multilateral agencies, that give Mr. Tesfamichael unique insights into development and creating growth throughout Africa.

Carol Pineau is an award-winning filmmaker and journalist with more than 20 years experience reporting on Africa. Her groundbreaking film, *Africa Open for Business*, and the advocacy campaign accompanying the film, helped change coverage in major media on Africa. It was voted BBC Documentary of the Year and won several other awards. Additional film credits include *Africa Investment Horizons* and *Kenya Stories*. Ms. Pineau recently hosted and produced a pilot for a new current affairs program, *Africa-USA Now*, and she was the host and producer of a 10-part current events talk show, *Africa and the Trump Administration*. She is currently producing a podcast series for Foreign Policy titled *Africa Moving Forward*. Ms. Pineau has reported and produced numerous television news stories for major international broadcast media, including two postings in Africa: Nairobi, covering the 12 East African nations for Voice of America, and Eritrea for CNN covering the Eritrean/Ethiopian conflict. Ms. Pineau is the author of numerous articles as well as a book. Her writing on Africa has appeared in major publications throughout the world, including *The Washington Post* and *Foreign Policy*.

Michal McElwain Malur is the Director of External Programs for the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. After joining in 1995, she has served in several leadership roles, including running the Center for Regional Analysis Survey Research Center and serving as Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Mason Enterprise Center. Her academic interests focus on regional economic development and the role played by technology and entrepreneurship. Mrs. Malur takes more than 100 graduate students abroad annually on a host of classes that compare political systems, trade and security policies, international development initiatives, examine global health strategies and cooperation, study entrepreneurship, public administration, and emergency response and peace keeping efforts. She has organized and led groups abroad to over 30 countries on five continents. She has served on several National Board of Directors, including the Border Trade Alliance and the County Executives of America, as well as regional boards such as the Northern Virginia Economic Development Coalition and the Northern Virginia Regional Partnership. Michal was the Director of Economic Development for the City of Manassas Park, VA. She has worked as a consultant to the Trading Force Limited in London; William-Lynn-James and the Blue Water Bridge Authority in Sarnia, Canada; K. Services International in Abu Dhabi, UAE; and the Institute for Trade and Commercial Diplomacy. Prior to her current post at George Mason University, Michal taught at the La Universidad de Negocios de Asturias in Asturias, Spain.

To register, send an email to Carol Pineau at cpineau@gmu.edu.