

Innovations for Poverty Action
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The Mawazo Institute
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Professional Experience

Associate Director of Social Protection Innovations for Poverty Action

May 2020 – present
London, UK (remote work)

- Led project development for new impact evaluations of social protection programs with government and NGO partners in Malawi, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe
- Raised US\$2.95 million in committed funding for new evaluations
- Oversaw grant reporting for donors including Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the World Bank, and USAID
- Organized “New Directions in Graduation Research” conference to highlight innovations in ultra-poor graduation programs in 10 countries, reaching over 120 participants
- Developed evidence reviews on topics including cash transfers, microfinance, and graduation programs for partners including the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, UNHCR, UNWomen, Fonkoze (Haiti) and Great Zimbabwe University
- Contributed to biweekly newsletter on “Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19,” reaching over 22,000 people
- Created a team within the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group focused on increasing representation of researchers from low and middle income countries at IPA

Chair of the Board Mawazo Institute

July 2018 - present
Nairobi, Kenya

- Recruited a diverse 12-person board with expertise in fundraising, financial and legal compliance, and higher education in East Africa
- Chaired quarterly board meetings
- Oversaw required financial compliance in the US and Kenya
- Recruited consultants from On Think Tanks for strategic plan updates and leadership transition planning

Chief Operating Officer Mawazo Institute

Dec. 2016 – June 2018
Nairobi, Kenya

- Co-founder (with Dr. Rose Mutiso) of a non-profit which provides research funding and professional development training to women doing PhDs at accredited East African universities
- Raised \$1.25 million in seed funding for operations from 2017 - 2020
- Developed a strategic plan by mapping the ecosystem of universities and non-profit organizations providing support to PhD students in East Africa, and identifying key gaps which Mawazo was in a position to fill
- Designed Mawazo’s flagship PhD Scholars program, including setting policies for eligibility, selecting the value and acceptable uses of research grants, creating procedures for grant disbursement and financial tracking, and writing the curriculum for the year-long professional development program offered to accepted Scholars
- Oversaw program implementation, including application design, selection of the first cohort of 10 Scholars, grant disbursement, and training events
- Hired, on-boarded, and managed core program staff

- Managed the Institute’s finances by creating annual budgets, implementing software backend for accounting and payroll, and overseeing all expenditures
- Liaised with external accountants and lawyers in the US and Kenya to ensure compliance with all tax and legal requirements in both countries

Research Manager

March 2012 – June 2013

Innovations for Poverty Action

New Haven, CT, USA

- Research manager for Dr. Dean Karlan (Yale University), whose work assesses the impact of financial interventions such as microcredit, agricultural insurance, and business training in low income countries
- Supervised more than 20 impact evaluations in the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mexico, and Uganda
- Supported project staff on issues of research design, questionnaire development, survey software implementation, data collection, statistical analysis, IRB compliance, and financial management
- Disseminated research results by creating policy reports for implementing partners and preparing academic papers for publication

Research Intern

Jan. – July 2010

Innovations for Poverty Action

Tamale, Ghana

- Managed an evaluation of an index rainfall insurance policy for maize farmers
- Organized logistics and finances for a team of 40 surveyors carrying out a survey with 1100 respondents
- Audited surveyor performance and cleaned survey data in Stata

Client Assessment Fellow

May – Aug. 2009

FINCA International

Kinshasa, DR Congo

- Co-directed the baseline survey for an observational study examining whether Village Banking microloans raised clients’ incomes
- Constructed sample of 800 urban clients
- Translated questionnaire into French and conducted pilot interviews
- Hired, trained and managed six surveyors in Kinshasa and Matadi

Project Manager

Sept. 2008 – May 2009

Rwanda Works

Kigali, Rwanda

- Created a tourism promotion plan for one of Rwanda’s poorest districts in collaboration with government officials and local community groups
- Developed informational signs for local historical sites

Education

MA in Political Science

Aug. 2013 – June 2017

University of California, Berkeley

Berkeley, CA, USA

- Enrolled for the PhD program, and earned the MA in 2014
- Achieved ABD in 2016, then left the program in 2017 to pursue a full-time role as COO at the Mawazo Institute
- Subfields: comparative politics and African studies
- Dissertation proposal: “The Politics of Welfare Expansion in Africa”
- “Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor” for African Politics, Fall 2015

MA in International Relations**School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University**

Aug. 2010 – Dec. 2011

Washington, DC, USA

- Concentrations: international development and international economics
- Thesis: “Consociationalism and Ethnic Détente in Burundi”
- Graduated one semester early with honors (top 10% of class)

BA in Geography and French**Dartmouth College**

Sept. 2004 – June 2008

Hanover, NH, USA

- Spring 2007: Foreign Study Program at Univerzita Karlova, Prague
- Winter 2006: Language Study Abroad at Université de Toulouse II - Le Mirail, Toulouse
- Graduated *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa
- Guido Rahr '51 Award for Excellence in Geography

Teaching & Writing**Teaching**

- Graduate Student Instructor, Gender & Human Rights PS 123S, UC Berkeley (Spring 2016)
- Graduate Student Instructor, African Politics PS 146A, UC Berkeley (Fall 2015)

Presentations

- African Studies Association of Africa (2019)
- African Studies Association US (2016, 2017)
- American Political Science Association (2014, 2016, 2019)
- British Institute in Eastern Africa (2019)
- Development Studies Association (2016)
- Effective States and Inclusive Development (2019)

Commentary Articles at *African Arguments*, *Democracy in Africa*, *The Conversation Africa*, *The New Humanitarian*, and *The Republic* (Nigeria). Available at <http://rachelstrohm.com/writing>

Other Information

Residency USA (citizen) • UK (resident with right to work)

Languages English (native) • French (advanced) • Latin (intermediate) • Spanish (basic) • Kiswahili (basic)

Trainings

- On Think Tanks Winterschool, Geneva, Switzerland (2018)
- Social Protection Course, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (2016)
- Mixed Method Program Evaluation, Harvard Humanitarian Academy (2014)
- Great Lakes Course, Rift Valley Institute, Bujumbura, Burundi (2012)
- Summer Institute for General Management, Stanford School of Business (2008)

Volunteering

- NHS COVID-19 Vaccine Steward, London (2021 – present)
- Dartmouth Alumni Interviewer, Nairobi & Kampala (2017 – present)
- AuthorAID Mentor, remote collaboration with LMIC scholars (2015 – present)
- Africa Association Co-President, Johns Hopkins SAIS (2011)
- WomensTrust Microfinance Intern, Accra, Ghana & Hanover, NH (2007 - 2008)
- Students for Africa Co-President, Dartmouth (2006 - 2008)