

Innovations for Poverty Action
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Nairobi, Kenya
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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
Nairobi, Kenya

- Managed a portfolio of 28 evaluations of social protection programs in 18 countries, with a focus on cash transfers, livelihood programs, and the ultra-poor graduation model
- Led project development for new studies in Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe
- Raised US\$5.5 million in committed funding for new evaluations
- Oversaw grant reporting and relationship management with donors including Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the World Bank, and USAID
- Contributed to biweekly newsletter on “Social Protection in the Time of COVID-19,” reaching over 22,000 people

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
- Oversaw required financial compliance in the US and Kenya
- Led strategic planning process with consultancy support from On Think Tanks

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 to women doing PhDs at accredited East African universities
- Raised \$1.25 million in seed funding from individual donors and the Hewlett Foundation
- Designed Mawazo’s PhD Scholars program and oversaw program implementation, including the selection of the first cohort of 10 grantees and management of the training program
- 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 Innovations for Poverty Action

March 2012 – June 2013
New Haven, CT, USA

- Supervised more than 20 impact evaluations of financial inclusion programs 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, with a 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
- Dissertation proposal: "The Politics of Welfare Expansion in Africa"
- "Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor" for African Politics, Fall 2015

MA in International Relations Aug. 2010 – Dec. 2011
School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University Washington, DC, USA

- Concentrations: international development and international economics
- Thesis: "Consociationalism and Ethnic Détente in Burundi"
- Graduated with honors (top 10% of class)

BA in Geography and French Sept. 2004 – June 2008
Dartmouth College Hanover, NH, USA

- Foreign study at Université de Toulouse II - Le Mirail (2006) & Univerzita Karlova, Prague (2007)
- Honors: *magna cum laude*, 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) • Kenya (resident)

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)

Volunteering

- 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)