



TALKING DRUM



November 2021

African Scholars Forum Fall 2021 Semester Newsletter

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Introducing Interim Dean Rita Kiki Edozie, PhD



GGHS new PhD student showcase



GGHS PhD Students Latest Publications

The African Scholars Forum (ASF),
the Pan African Graduate Student Association (PAGSA),
and the African Student Union (ASU) @ UMass Boston
Present

*Decolonizing African Education:
Its Role in Transforming the Continent*

a keynote address by
Dr. Godwin R. Murunga
Executive Secretary for CODESRIA
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Friday, October 22nd, 2021
Zoom &/or
Y02-2310/2nd Floor University Hall,
UMass Boston

[Register Here!](#)






[A New Chapter for the McCormack Graduate School – Introducing Interim Dean Rita Kiki Edozie, PhD](#)

The start of a new academic year is a time of excitement, new beginnings, and reflection for students, faculty, and staff alike. This year, the McCormack Graduate School (MGS) is proud to celebrate a familiar face stepping into a new role – [Rita Kiki Edozie, PhD](#) has been appointed as Interim Dean and will begin her tenure at the start of the fall semester. Edozie will be the fourth dean of MGS and is the first woman, person of color, and academic to hold the deanship.

NEWSECURITYBEAT
the blog of the Environmental Change and Security Program

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Climate Change and Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria
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Niger's Kandadji Dam Project: Conflict Concerns
Posted November 9, 2021 by [Balkissa Daouda Diallo](#) & filed under [Energy Transitions and Conflict](#), [Urbanization and Environment](#)

The [Kandadji Dam project](#) in Niger is projected to displace about 38,000 people living near the Niger River due to the ongoing activities. The economic development goals of the project are to address food, water and energy insecurities in the region. The initiative is part of the larger [Niger River Basin scheme](#). Niger lies in a semi-arid zone prone to desertification and is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.



Opening Remarks



In welcoming you to a special return to campus this fall, after a year and a half of remote teaching, learning, and work-delivery at UMass Boston, I am honored to share the news of my appointment as interim Dean of the John W McCormack School of Policy and Global Studies (see Dean's message [here](#)) while retaining the chairmanship of McCormack's Africa Scholars Forum (ASF). Our fall 2021 edition of Talking Drum emphasizes the critical importance of UMass Boston's Africa Scholars Forum as a core agenda for the policy, public service, and global studies curriculum.

McCormack's academic agenda is focused on teaching, researching, and programmatic engagement in public service, public affairs, public policy, public administration, economic and international development, government and legislative studies, international development, and global governance. Events occurring in the African continent are at the heart of many of McCormack's policy themes. This is true whether such events include resolving and managing conflict in Ethiopia and the Sudan, advancing international trade for African and global mutual prosperity, or governing the migration of Africans throughout the world, though particularly to Europe and the US where migration crises dominate global governance policy debates.

That is why in the current edition of Talking Drum, you will be excited to read about my appointment as McCormack's new interim Dean, and how in continuing the legacy of our former Dean, David Cash, my own leadership will continue to center our program in African affairs at the intersectional crux of international policy affairs, offering it to McCormack and UMass Boston students and faculty as an important new curricula agenda. To this end, given the school's strategic priorities in research and scholarship, our ASF welcome event invited Dr. Godwin Murunga, the 7th Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Africa's foremost research institution. To emphasize the importance of our African studies agenda on campus, Provost Joseph Berger who also joined the discussion, noted the need to maintain a connection between the African continent and the US to promote an exchange of knowledge and learning.

Finally, this year, at UMass Boston, we are fortunate to be joined by several new African and Africanist graduate students at McCormack who will begin the educational journey in many

of our disciplines ranging from global governance, public policy, and to aging studies. Welcome Fridah, Amadou, Nkasi, Makda, Angesom, Adanna, Mahersh, and Dorcas!

Rita Kiki Edozie (PhD)

Interim Dean, The John W. McCormack School for Policy and Global Studies

Professor of International Relations, Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security and Global Governance

Chair, The African Scholars Forum@ McCormack

Decolonizing Africa's Education as a Precursor for the Continent's Transformation



The transformation agenda of higher education in Africa. The transition from decolonization to decoloniality has not happened primarily because the African higher education and education system is being held back by a focus on reforms rather than on transformation. While decoloniality, as the end

result of the transformation process, is important, without a clear transformation agenda it is impossible to attain the transformation the continent is seeking. Missing in this architecture of aspiration is the logic of coloniality which is different from the logic of decolonization because decoloniality engenders both an emancipatory and transformatory logic.

The reasons for decoloniality today are because of a correct assumption that transformation from decolonization to decoloniality did abort at some point before it achieved its central objective of completely overhauling the basis upon which systems of coloniality were built and imported into the African

“The transition from decolonization to decoloniality has not happened primarily because the African higher education and African education system is being held back by a focus on reforms rather than on transformation”

continent. But, on agency of decolonization, what is it that we set to achieve in the process of decolonizing Africa from colonial structures? The agency of transforming Africa from a colonial system to a postcolonial one either misunderstood the agenda, or simply capitulated to the logic of neocolonialism evident in, according to Franz Fanon, “Africa enjoying flag independence but hardly having substantive transformation away from the colonial logic.” Alternatively, one can say that mechanisms of colonialism, having transformed themselves into a neocolonial



system, retained the capacity to control a large chunk of many of the systems that would have enabled us to move from decolonization to decoloniality. In his two books, “Africa Must Unite” and “Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism,” Kwame Nkrumah makes the

“The central argument that has persisted in the literature is one that has meant that the basis of colonial education was alienation.”

argument about colonialism transforming itself into a neocolonial system, therefore capturing the very logic that Africa has enabled that transformation from decolonization to decoloniality. Nkrumah makes the point that the system of education that remained on the continent was a remnant of the very colonial system that was being eradicated. Therefore, that transformation that was aborted remains captured in

a system that Africa has not been able to systematically dismantle and help facilitate a major transition. To understand the difficulty of transforming decolonialism via an emancipatory project into a decolonized system which is able to enhance continental transformation with a focus on the education system as a critical element of programming. This is because one must understand the nature of the education system on the continent since the colonial period, together with the understanding that, if at all, there were any transformations that took place from the colonial education system into the post-colonial era. The central argument that has persisted in the literature is one that has meant that the basis of colonial education was alienation. There is equally a huge debate of whether this was positive or negative. It is this alienation that simply removed the humanity of Africans and replaced it with Western modernity, thereby presenting a different

humanity. The basis of colonial alienation has been a central problem in transforming African higher education in favor of enhancing continental transformation. These systems have in many senses undermined the possibilities of the transformation of the continent because a lot of what is advanced through their systems of education is designed to look outward other than look inward. The challenge of indigenous knowledge and indigenous systems of education is because it is confronted by a whole range of institutions on the continent that make it difficult for this focus to make sense. The omnipresence and the omnipotence of these institutions that facilitate extraversion is one of the central factors that must be dealt with if actual transformation of the agenda of the African continent, driven by education, has to advance.



A lot of the issues that make a reference point in education in Africa, both from the colonial period into the present, have as their reference points, not markers within African history or African cultural systems, but rather largely within European reference points. Africa missed an important opportunity at the moment of transition from

colonialism into independence partly because the focus on education was not overhauled to allow for a mission and vision which centers systems of thought that are relevant to the diversity of the continent and its Pan-African world. On the contrary, across the continent, in the putative year of 1960 to the 1990s and on, the focus was on an education system that is designed to Africanize the worthy, churning people out of the education system with a focus on Africanization. There is Africanization on different fronts that include an adoption of a whole range of strategies to ensure the workforce is thoroughly Africanized. Beyond that, one does not see any major clip of transformation. The system of education therefore struggles largely to find its place in the national system of the national political economy and beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. The next important step missed at independence was to think about Africa's education system and its role in transformation and beyond the narrow nation-state framework instead of the broader continental space. This was responsible for fragmenting what would otherwise be an initiative that

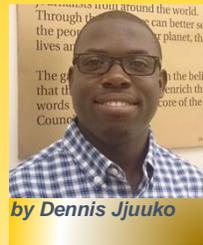
needs to go beyond the continent, and the transformation that is desired is, more often than not, fragmented into narrow nationalistic lenses.

The more modern and contemporary era has also seen being driven by initiative not local to our communities and local institutions, not driven by the priorities of governments on the continent, but driven by another neoliberal framework which, at its core, is an argument that the value of education rests with the rate of return on investment. The Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) essentially forced the rate of return-on-investment analysis with the argument that education has to be treated as any other important investment. It was an investment useless to make unless the return is good. Unfortunately, the spillover effects of education, many of which are not measurable on a market-based logic, are treated as irrelevant in the analysis of education. The result of which is that there has been a justification for under-investment in education, itself representing a retreat on the gains that had been made in setting up the education system as an important precursor to transformation. If we are to think about decoloniality and continental transformation, at the center of this discussion must be a conversation about the extent to which decoloniality requires a disruption of all colonial and neocolonial logics that have under-guarded education. A revival or introduction of forms of thought that speak to the diversity of situations on the continent must engage the necessity to disrupt, driven by the desire to change the logic of how we think about the education sector. Such an undertaking will need for Africa to deal with external control and the location of knowledge about Africa. There are existing continental structures that are designed to facilitate a transformation of the continent; The AU Vision 2063 is one that has placed central importance on education.

“Transformation is not about focusing on the managerial and tinkering with change. It is a process that avoids the easy options and goes with the more sophisticated challenges”

Africa has to be radical in thinking about education in order to facilitate transformation. For Tade Aina, “Transformation is an intentional social, political, and intellectual project of planned change aimed at addressing historical disadvantages, inequities, and serious structural dysfunctions.” Projects of transformation challenge assumptions, values, and power relations, and they offer alternative visions and situations. Transformation implies practical and epistemological ruptures with previous ways of doing and a reconstruction relations, cultures, and institutions. In the case of African higher education, transformation entails going beyond reforms. It involves a re-examination of inherited institutions, how we think about and live with them, and a reconstruction of these institutions as sustainable structures meeting African needs.

Transformation is not about focusing on the managerial and tinkering with change. It cannot be a top-down process. Unless the transformation question is resolved, decoloniality cannot occur. Re-thinking the education system from the basic level to the tertiary level is important. Introducing capacity-building initiatives that help to transform the way of thinking about this is critical. At the policy level, there is need for an intervention that allows Africans to recapture that level of sovereignty over their own policy decisions.



A New Chapter for the McCormack Graduate School – Introducing Interim Dean Rita Kiki Edozie, PhD



The start of a new academic year is a time of excitement, new beginnings, and reflection for students, faculty, and staff alike. This year, the McCormack

Graduate School (MGS) is proud to celebrate a familiar face stepping into a new role – Rita Kiki Edozie, PhD has been appointed as Interim Dean and will begin her tenure at the start of the fall semester. Dean Edozie will be the fourth dean of MGS and is the first woman, person of color, internationalist, and career academic to hold the deanship.

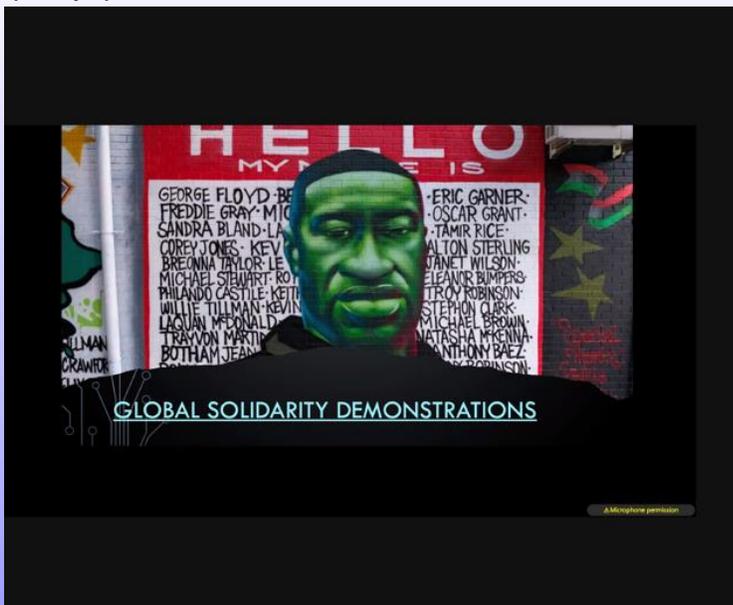
“Being appointed Dean of a policy and global studies school for an interim period is the culmination of a long, enduring career journey that I didn’t expect to happen so soon, but I’m excited that it did,” shared Edozie in reflecting upon her new role and looking back at four years as MGS’ Associate Dean. “[To me, success looks like] building upon my predecessor David Cash’s legacy of

“Being appointed Dean of a policy and global studies school for an interim period is the culmination of a long, enduring career journey that I didn’t expect to happen so soon, but I’m excited that it did,”

connecting the policy school's core mission to solving real world socio-political and socio-economic local, national, regional, and global problems through interdisciplinary policy analysis and action as well as connecting an already existing vibrant student success and faculty productivity agenda to this mission.”

Edozie is an accomplished scholar having published eight books (with one forthcoming, *Africa's New Global Politics: Regionalism in International Relations*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2022) and several peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and policy briefs, including co-authoring *Changing Faces of Greater Boston* with UMass Boston's ethnic studies institutes, the Donahue Institute, and the Boston Foundation (2019). She is on the board of directors of the world-renowned academy and Rutgers University-based African Studies Association (ASA) and on the executive board of the West African Research Association (WARA) hosted at Boston University.

Edozie began her post-doctoral career 20 years ago, “transitioning from a newly minted PhD in Political Studies from the New School for Social Research in New York City to my first four year university job as the Deputy Director and a Lecturer in International Relations at Columbia University's School of International and Political Affairs (SIPA) and then spending 12 years at Michigan State University's James Madison College of International and Public Affairs as a professor and director,” she shared. “With this much progressive experience in interdisciplinary policy, public affairs, and international studies academic leadership; I'm excited to bring it all with



me to envision continuity and change as the college's new Dean!" Outside of her work on behalf of the McCormack Graduate School, Edozie enjoys listening to R&B, ballroom dancing (“when [she] can get to it”) and mentoring her three young adult children in navigating career success and life's challenges. Finding innovative and impactful solutions for modern day challenges – such as combatting COVID-19 and climate

change, promoting democracy and equity, and advocating for racial, social, and environmental justice – are at the heart of McCormack's commitment to public service and leveraging learning to make a difference in people's lives throughout the world. On the domestic front, “two major

events – one in 2020, the George Floyd murder by police brutality and the other on Jan 6, 2021, the violent insurrection by militant nationalist groups on our capitol building – reflect the ongoing crisis of democracy in our nation – and around the world,” said Edozie. “Our college will debate police brutality and racial justice; voting rights, threats to suffrage, and expanding notions of American citizenship; and the declining state of democracy and human rights around the world.” Internationally and among our global community, “the challenges of ending a 20-year war with American troop withdrawal from Afghanistan will inform policy debates about US foreign policy, terrorism, refugees and migration, inequality, and global development for a long time,” explained Edozie. “[As another example], [devastation caused by the] Haitian earthquake will inform ongoing policy discussions about climate change and humanitarian intervention.”

As Interim Dean, Edozie hopes to lead MGS on important strategic priorities, including fundraising and strengthening the college’s extramural grant awards; strengthening cross-campus collaborations to grow and expand the college’s academic programs; conducting myriad DEI initiatives that will serve to diversify doctoral student enrollments, increase faculty and staff of color appointments, and improve the curricular and workplace compositional climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the college. “[I am excited to] continue building our infrastructure so that we can achieve our goals to engender the McCormack scholar who makes policy impact in John W. McCormack’s name in Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, nationally, and around the world,” Edozie emphasized.

The upcoming academic year, like the last two, will once again be impacted and shaped by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s all about the hybrid learning environment – some in person learning; some remote learning, and some online learning. This is the same for [faculty and staff] - a few days in-person; a few days remote,” said Edozie. “We will all adjust to a post-Covid world together!” As the McCormack community prepares to begin this next semester together, Dean Edozie offers this advice: “be inspired by policy learning, deliberation and debate, and action to do your bit in making the world a better place.”

For more information about the article go to

https://www.umb.edu/news/detail/a_new_chapter_for_the_mccormack_graduate_school_introducing_interim_dean_rita_kiki_edozie_phd

How to deal with Stress as a Graduate student during the Covid-19 Pandemic



Source <https://www.massachusetts.edu/returning-campus>

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a disease that has traumatized many people in the past 22 months. People have lost many loved ones in the process. In addition, many plans have had to be cancelled or postponed, such as academic conferences,

research trips (domestically or internationally), and get-togethers with family and friends. The majority of people have spent much of their time indoors ever since the pandemic began. For instance, a lot of people have transitioned to working from home and online learning, which is not conducive for many. Many graduate students are more productive during face-to-face classes compared to the virtual because they believe in-person classes create the enabling environment for more academic discussions in which they can learn and retain vital ideas from their classmates.

Even though there are many people who had cancelled their outdoor plans due to the risks and fear of the Coronavirus, there are people that still do not believe in the existence of the virus and have made it difficult to fight against its increase. Sometimes people would get shamed for following the rules and guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), such as maintaining 6 feet apart, washing our hands, as well as wearing face masks to stay protected. Despite the invention of the COVID-19 vaccine, people are still refusing to be vaccinated because many believe that the vaccine is being rushed and was not properly tested.

However, there are many ways to deal with stress to help make our lives easier in graduate school. We can come up with many new hobbies and discover talents we never knew that we had. Stress can be very dangerous to the point where it can lead to suicidal thoughts. It can also make people think less of themselves. Depression has been on the rise with the COVID-19 situation and people being isolated. Many schools and workplaces have opened, and people are able to go in-person. However, it is still not the same as it used to be a few years ago because we still must wear masks in classrooms and offices, as well as maintain the

6ft distance. When will it ever go back to normal? We are not sure yet, but we can remain positive, stay safe, and hope for the best.

In the meantime, we must try different destress. First, words of affirmation and doing activities to relax the body are a great way to relieve stress in these unprecedented times. An example would be listening to podcasts. It is nice to listen to that while working out, planning daily activities, doing chores such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. Second, listening to music can also be soothing. Sometimes listening to instrumental music while reading or doing an assignment can be therapeutic. Another way to destress is to spend indoor quality time with a family member. Finally, having a small potluck with (vaccinated) loved ones would be a nice idea since everyone loves food. Some of these ideas, among others, can potentially play a role in helping graduate students navigate the stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Listening to music can also be soothing”



Showcasing New GGHS PhD Students from Africa

From Kenya: Meet Fridah Dermmillah Obare PhD Student in Global Governance and Human Security



Fridah Dermmillah Obare is a PhD student in Global Governance and Human Security. She holds a Master of Science in Biology of Conservation from the University of Nairobi, Kenya and a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Management from Moi University, Kenya. Dermmillah works with Kenya Wildlife Service, is passionate about reptile conservation, and is a member of the IUCN Species Specialized Commission - Crocodile Specialist Group. Her research interests include Multi-Environmental Agreements, science diplomacy, international policy analysis, and the African Union. She aspires to integrate science into policy decision-making, especially in

the African Union.

From Nigeria: Meet Nkasi Wodu, PhD Student in Global Governance and Human Security



Nkasi Wodu is a Peace practitioner with over 10 years' experience working in Nigeria. He is currently a Doctoral Student in Global Governance and Human Security at the John McCormack School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He facilitated the Partners for Peace Network (P4P), a network of over 9,000 peace actors in the Niger Delta region, mobilized for community-led initiatives to contribute to the reduction of violence in Nigeria. He is a skilled trainer and facilitator and has provided capacity building and mentorship to thousands of peace actors. He led the implementation of the peace map, and the most comprehensive dataset on conflict risk currently available in Nigeria. He is a trained lawyer, has called to the Nigerian Bar, an Alumni of the prestigious Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Accra, certified mediation trainer, and practitioner from the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (Nigeria). He also holds a master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Port Harcourt.

From The Gambia: Meet Amadou B. Jallow PhD Student in Global Governance and Human Security



Amadou B. Jallow, is a first-year doctoral student at the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security and Global Governance, University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston). He works as a Research Assistant with the Africa Scholars Forum (ASF) at UMass. He holds a BA in Development Studies at the University of The Gambia, and an MA in International Development Studies at the Center for International Studies, Ohio University. His research interest focuses on Diaspora Participation in African Politics, Forest Policy, and Climate Change.

From Nigeria: Meet Adanna Kalejaye PhD Student in Public Policy



Adanna Kalejaye is an internationally specialized lawyer in the fields of commercial law, maritime law, environmental law, and Energy law. She holds an LL.M (Master of Law) from Swansea University and an LL. B (Bachelor of Laws) from the University of Nigeria. She is also enrolled as a Barrister and solicitor to practice Law at the Nigerian Supreme Court since 2010. She has obtained certification and membership at the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers. As an affiliate member of the Institute of shipping and trade law; she frequently attends its colloquium in Wales and London. Adanna is a member of the Working Group on Governance and Legal Issues at the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA).

Adanna is a PhD student in Public Policy at the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Public and Global Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research interests in environmental law continues to give her critical insights into problems of law and society-particularly, development, social and environmental justice- as articulated in different legal theories. This has ensured she developed an in-depth knowledge and thorough understanding of political landscapes, policy building and international educational, judicial, political, economic, cultural and geo-political compositions and systems.

From Ethiopia: Meet Angesom Teklu PhD Student in Public Policy



Angesom Teklu is a Ph.D. student in the Public Policy doctoral program at University of Massachusetts Boston. He also holds an M.A. in Sustainable International Development from Brandeis University. He is passionate about helping community organizations design and implement programs that add value to community members. Before joining his doctoral program, he worked as an international development practitioner both in Eastern Africa and in the U.S., specifically in capacity building, civic engagement, workforce, and organizational development. His current research interests are immigration policies and local communities' engagement to improve policy and action.

McCormack’s Africa Scholars Forum Sponsors Four UMass Boston Students Attendance at the African Studies Association Conference of 2021

Africanists positioning themselves in the study of Africa is an important step on the journey of transforming the continent. The African Studies Association (ASA) annual meeting is one of the many which facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experiences on the study of Africa. The ASA annual meeting is the largest gathering of Africanist scholars in the world and is the flagship event of the association. With an attendance of over 2,000 scholars and professionals, the conference offers the following: more than 300 panels and roundtables; plenary events featuring keynote speakers; an awards ceremony and dance party; institutional and organizational receptions and meetings; an international exhibit hall; and screenings of award-winning movies from Africa, and/or by African producers. It is because of these benefits this facilitated learning that the Africa Scholars Forum (ASF) at UMass Boston sponsored four (4) students to attend the 2021 ASA conference under the theme, “Re-centering Africa: Resistance and Renewal in a World Beyond Covid-19.” This sponsorship enabled the four students to attend and participate in a wide array of panels on the study of Africa. The four students include: Makda Teklemichael a graduate student in the Gender, Leadership and Public Policy; Fridah Dermillah Obare, a doctoral student in the Global Governance and Human Security program; Mahesh Admankar, a doctoral student of Public Policy; and Chidimma Ozor from the School of Global Inclusion and Development. Their experiences of attending the 2021 ASA conference will be published in the forthcoming ASF Newsletter of December.



Chidimma Ozor Commer, PhD
School of Global Inclusion and
Social Development



Makda Teklemichael, MA
Honors College: Gender,
Leadership and Public Policy



Mahesh Admankar, PhD
Department of Public Policy
and Public Affairs



Fridah D. Obare PhD
Global Governance and
Human Security

Showcasing GGHS PhD Candidates Latest Publications

Niger's Kandadji Dam Project: Conflict Concerns

Posted November 9, 2021 by [Balkissa DaoudaDiallo](#) & filed under [Energy Transitions and Conflict](#), [Urbanization and Environment](#)

The Kandadji Dam project in Niger is projected to displace about 38,000 people living near the Niger River due to the ongoing activities. The economic development goals of the project are to address food, water and energy insecurities in the region. The initiative is part of the larger [Niger River Basin scheme](#). Niger lies in a semi-arid zone prone to desertification and is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.



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GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Climate Change and Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria

November 15, 2021 | By [Ojemire B. Daniel](#)



International attention often focuses on ethnic conflict in the Niger Delta and religious conflict in Northern Nigeria, leaving farmer-herdsmen overlooked. In Nigeria, the conflict between farmers and herders has posed severe security challenges and has claimed far more lives than the Boko Haram insurgency. The conflict has threatened the country's security, undermined national stability and unity, killed and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and increased ethnic, regional, and religious polarization.

Farmer-herder relationships are simultaneously conflicting and complementary. Their complex relationships have always been anchored between coexistence and cooperation on the one hand, and competition and conflict on the other hand. Unfortunately, the increasing stress placed on shared natural resources—namely fresh water and land as a result of climate change—have further strained the relationships between the farmers and herders.



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For more information, contact the African Scholars Forum at AfricaScholarsForum@umb.edu or at 617.287.5550