

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

Message from the Director

As the academic year comes to a close, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the wonderful activities carried out over the past year and all that we learned together. Please read below for these highlights and important take-aways.

I also want to thank our brilliant CAE staff – Mala’ka Gillette and Amaeka Effiong – for their tireless efforts advancing CAE’s mission. It has been a pleasure and privilege to collaborate with them. I also want to congratulate Mala’ka, and all of those in our community joining her, on their upcoming graduation. You have worked hard and deserve a wonderful celebration.

Congratulations!

As we continue to navigate a complicated time globally, nationally, and locally here at Columbia, our CAE staff, faculty, and students stand ready to support one another through these turbulent times. Showing up for one another, engaging in critical dialogue, embracing diversity, and respecting humanity are central to these efforts. We look forward to continuing these efforts during the 2025-2026 academic year. For now, I wish everyone a pleasant and restorative summer.

Mary Mendenhall
CAE Director

On Campus Events

Kuzaliwa: A Guided Walking Tour with Black Gotham Experience

April 18, 2025



This semester, we had the privilege of hosting an extraordinary experience: Kuzaliwa: A Guided Walking Tour with Black Gotham Experience. Led by founder [Kamau Ware](#) (pictured bottom right), this walk offered participants a journey through Harlem's rich history.

We extend our thanks to Joe Kim (Ed.M. '26) for capturing these beautiful photographs.

Kuzaliwa, meaning “birth” in Swahili, challenged us to reconsider conventional narratives about the Harlem Renaissance. Rather than accepting established timelines and celebrated figures at face value, Ware posed thought-provoking questions: *Who named this cultural movement? How did racism contradict or complicate this cultural enlightenment? To what extent did political events happening in Harlem during the*

today?

The tour revealed buildings throughout Harlem that, despite their tremendous historical significance, remain unmarked and unrecognized in official narratives. Participants walked away with a deeper understanding of how history is preserved (or erased) through physical spaces, and how communities continue to navigate issues of cultural identity, recognition, and belonging in environments shadowed by gentrification.

Pan-Africanism & Education: Interdisciplinary & Critical Approaches in the 21st Century

April 11, 2025



[Conference Website](#)

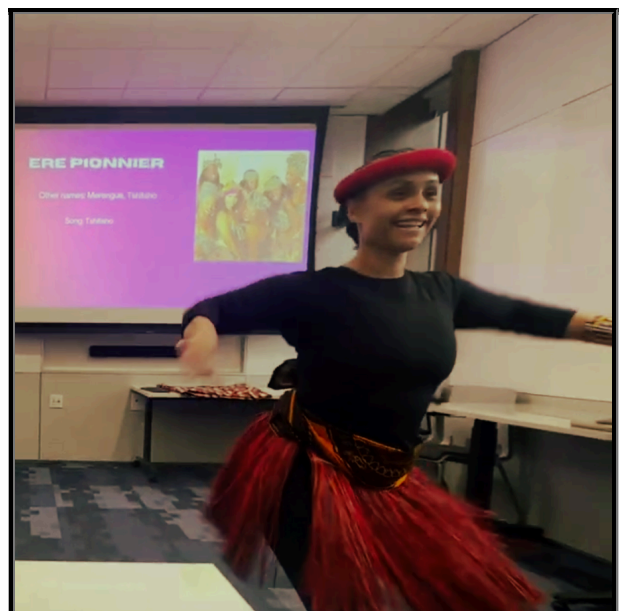
This Diversity & Community Initiatives Grant Fund-sponsored event convened students from across Columbia schools in conversations surrounding their wide-ranging work related to Pan-African discourse. The symposium began with Dane Peters, a Doctoral candidate in Social Studies Education, who explored how immersive study-abroad experiences in Africa can revolutionize teacher education by cultivating intercultural competence through African Diaspora Literacy. This opening seamlessly transitioned to Kamiah Brown, M.P.H candidate in Sociomedical Sciences, who articulated distinctions between racial capitalism and structural racism, highlighting innovative measurement approaches in public health contexts. Concluding the first panel, Natacha Robert, Doctoral candidate in Curriculum & Teaching, highlighted collaborations between independent African-centered institutions and African American/Black communities in nurturing Black students within African-centered educational frameworks.



Pictured from left to right: Natacha Robert, Kamiah Brown, Dane Peters

The momentum continued with our Faculty Flash Talk featuring Dr. David Hansen, Professor in Historical & Philosophical Foundations of Education, who unpacked Aimé Césaire's contributions to what contemporary Africana Studies recognizes as 'Africana humanism'—a distinctive cosmopolitan, Pan-African worldview that continues to shape discourse today.

Transcending traditional academic presentations, Eto'o Tsana delivered a dance presentation titled *Kongo Stories and Rhythms*. The Doctoral candidate in Dance Education demonstrated how movement embodies research, specifically through Kongo traditional dances and their enduring influence throughout the African diaspora.



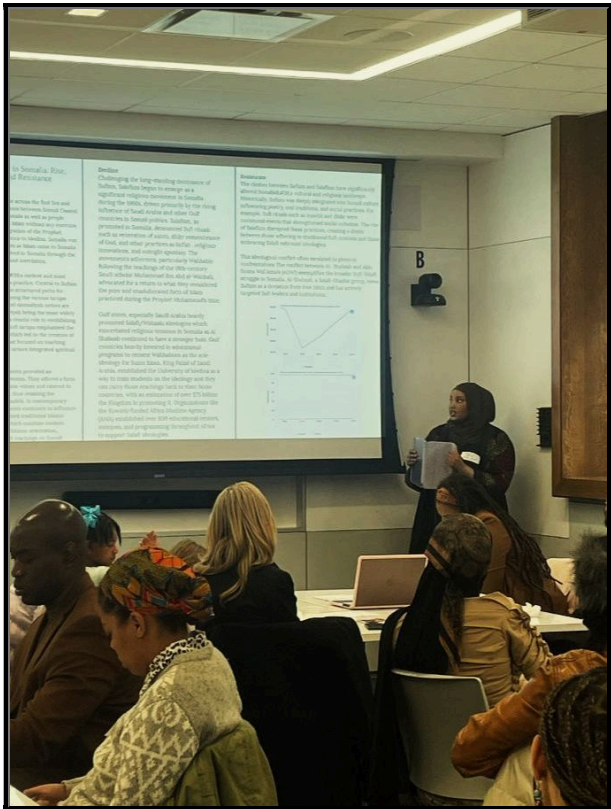
The second panel showcased an equally impressive array of perspectives. Kikelomo Sanni, M.A. candidate of Climate and Society, presented a refreshingly Black-centered vision of environmental sustainability. Theresa Cann, Doctoral candidate in International and Comparative Education, shared insights from her field research in Ghana, highlighting women's pivotal activism in decolonizing higher education. Chantel Heard, MSW candidate, made a compelling case for culturally specific assessment tools that capture the nuanced experiences of Black students in higher education beyond

complex impact on educational access.



Pictured from left to right: Alex Magu, Chantel Heard, Theresa Cann, Kikelomo Sanni

The 'lunch and learn'–style poster session added another dynamic layer of engagement to the event. Shamsa Ahmed, M.A. candidate in Economic and Political Development, guided attendees through the fascinating Sufi trajectory in Somalia—its rise, decline, and resistance. Shapel LaBorde, Doctoral candidate in Philosophy and Education, concluded with “The Archive is in my Skin”, a profound exploration of aesthetic labor, embodied knowledge, and the politics of Black care.



This remarkable convening of minds and methodologies would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, the intellectual generosity of our presenters, and the engaged participation of our attendees.

the [Massawa](#) team for their delicious catered cuisine. Together, we created a space where Pan-African discourse flourished in all its complexity and richness.

Lunch & Learn: Race and Gender Equity in Brazil

March 13, 2025



Hailing from Brazil, we welcomed two distinguished visitors to Teachers College for an illuminating lunch and learn session moderated by Inara Bezerra (M.Ed. ‘25). Márcia Ribeiro, an accomplished lawyer and current PhD candidate, guided us through the rich history of Black Brazilian feminist scholarship and activism. With eloquence and depth, she unveiled the historical legacy and contemporary manifestations of intersectional oppression, revealing how the intersection of gender and race contributes to the social disparities that persist today.

Building upon this foundation, Dr. Ana Luísa Machado, co-founder of [Instituto GENi](#), offered compelling insights into the grassroots movements led by Black women across Brazil. These organizations, she explained, are at the forefront of the struggle for racial and gender equality, advocating for meaningful reparations and embracing the transformative concept of *bem viver*. This philosophy envisions a revolutionary form of social organization rooted in the ancestral wisdom of traditional communities. *Bem viver* serves as a framework for a more community-centered society that honors ancestral wisdom and place-based lifeways.



Pictured from left to right: Inara Bezerra, Dr. Ana Luísa Machado, Márcia Ribeiro

Listening & Learning with Human Rights Advocates
engaging in LGBTQIA+ advocacy work in Africa

March 4, 2025

LISTENING & LEARNING

with Human Rights Advocates engaging in LGBTQIA+ advocacy work in Africa



CONNEX KHOMBA
Advocacy and Grants Officer Ivy Foundation
MALAWI



KUTLWANO MAGASHULA
Executive Officer for Programs The Other Foundation SOUTH AFRICA



WANJA NGURE
Grant Manager UHAI EASHRI KENYA

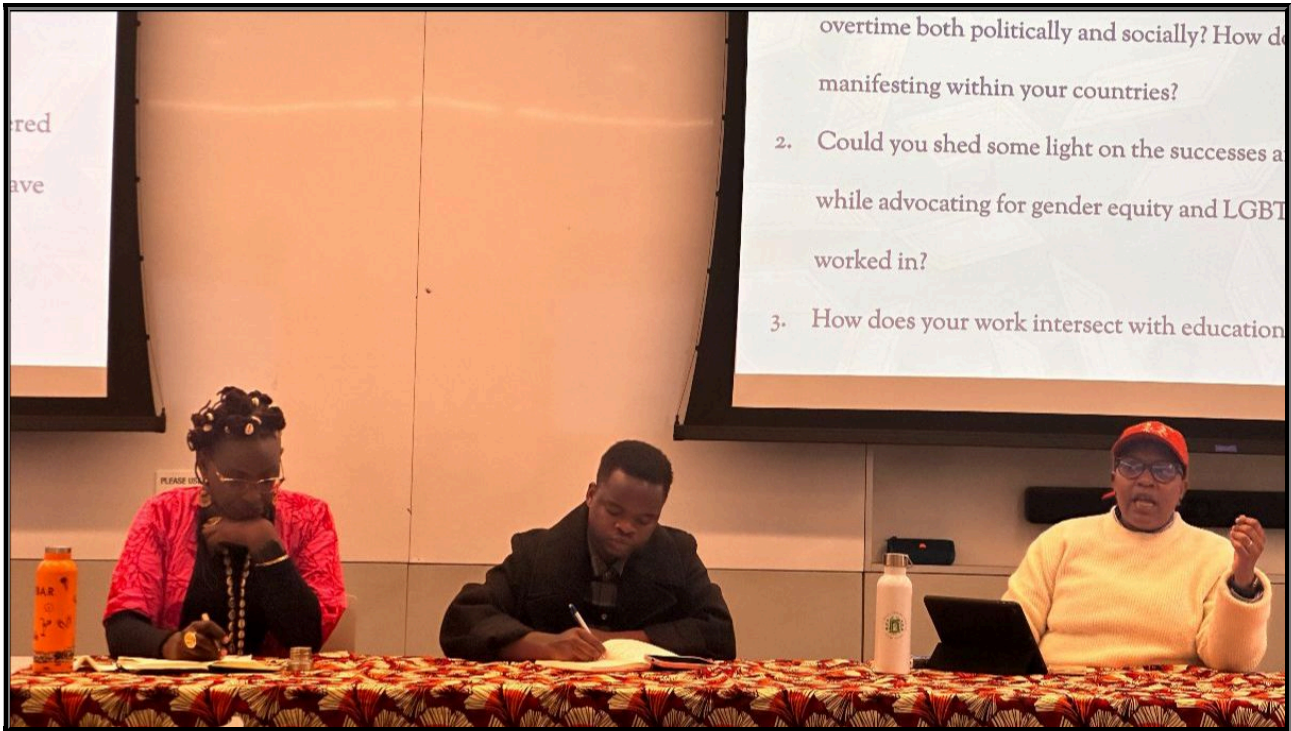
It was an honor to host the Institute for the Study of Human Rights’s 2024-2025 [Human Rights Advocates](#) from East and South Africa. The gathering brought together three

Connex Khomba of Malawi offered compelling insights into his impactful work with the Ivy Foundation. His advocacy for policy reforms recognizing the rights and dignity of intersex and transgender individuals demonstrates the power of persistence in challenging entrenched systems.

From South Africa, Kutlwano Magashula captivated us with stories of their collaborative efforts alongside activist groups throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Their multifaceted approach—addressing personal, institutional, and ideological barriers while supporting strategic impact litigation—has created vital platforms for women and marginalized communities to reshape legal and policy frameworks.

Wanja Ngure shared her leadership in championing non-discriminatory healthcare access and other fundamental rights. Her commitment to community-centered development was evident as she described spearheading innovative initiatives that have transformed policies in human rights, feminism, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV response across Africa.

The conversation flowed with an electric energy, connecting narratives of challenge and triumph. What blossomed from our discussion was a sense of possibility—living proof that committed advocacy can reshape our world in profound and sustainable ways.



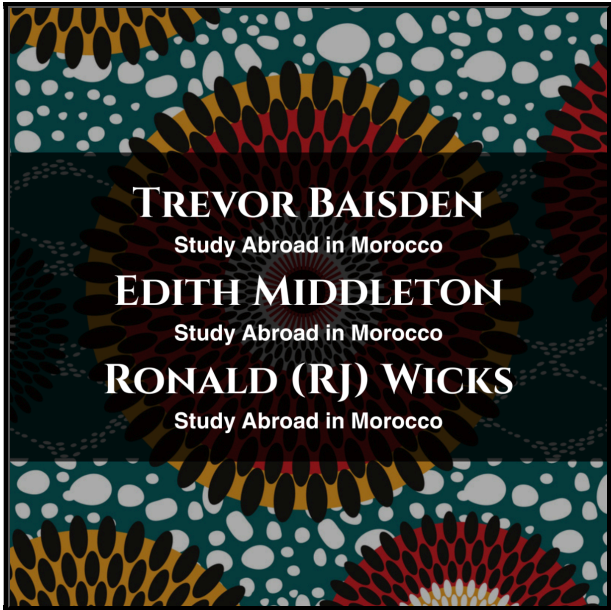
Pictured from left to right: Wanja Ngure, Connex Khomba, Kutlwano Magashula

This Year’s Grant Recipients

Congratulations to all grant and scholarship recipients!

Whether you’re exploring education policies alongside CAE Director Dr. Mary Mendenhall, advancing knowledge through research initiatives, or gaining valuable

and contributions that will surely bloom from your summer endeavors.



Student Affiliates



Tarik Endale, PhD Candidate in Clinical Psychology



Natacha Robert, PhD Candidate in Curriculum and Instruction

Welcome to our new student affiliates, Tarik and Natacha! And congratulations to our graduating student affiliates (pictured from left to right below) Paola, Theresa, Alexandra, Theo, and Darren.

CONGRATULATIONS!



[View bios](#)

To become a student affiliate with the George Clement Bond Center for African Education, please fill out [this form](#) on our website!

Open CAE Positions

The Center is thrilled to announce the opening of **two Graduate Assistant positions** for the 2025-2026 academic year!



Position Details:

- Center for African Education Graduate Assistant: [View Job Description and Desired Qualifications](#)
- Ubumwe 2.0 Graduate Research Assistant: [View Job Description and Desired Qualifications](#)



Application Deadline: Friday, June 6th, 2025

(Students may apply to more than 1 position)



For any questions about the roles, feel free to reach out to us at cae@tc.columbia.

African Studies Working Group

Seeking New Leaders and Members to join the African Studies Working Group!


The Center for African Education is seeking TC students who are passionate about African studies and the African Diaspora to be leaders and members of the African Studies Working Group (ASWG).

ASWG Goals:

- Develop a dynamic, and sustainable network of African and diaspora studies scholars and practitioners who have research and work interests in this field
- Facilitate opportunities for graduate and doctoral students to develop and showcase their scholarly interests and academic pursuits related to Africa
- Establish and maintain partnerships with other African-focused student organizations and groups within Columbia University and other institutions.

As a leader or member of the ASWG, your role will involve:

- Creating and supporting opportunities for members to connect and collaborate
- Advancing academic pursuits and research
- Building robust relationships with other organizations and institutions
- Following the guidelines laid out for TC student organizations by the Graduate Student Life & Development office

 If you are interested or have any questions about this student organization, feel free to reach out to us at cae@tc.columbia.edu

CAE Resources

Office Hours

Need guidance with research, a project, or idea generation concerning African or diaspora education? Reach out to the Graduate Assistants [here](#) to schedule a time to chat!

Contact Us

cae@tc.columbia.edu

Teachers College, Columbia University

For further support, consider consulting with the [Subject Specialists](#) at Columbia University. Librarians specialize in African Studies (both North and South of the Sahara) and African-American Studies.

Main Campus Library Resources: Subject Specialists



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