The 2023–2025 Socio-Legal Journals Global South Writing Workshops, supported once again by British Academy funding, are organised by Cardiff Law School's Centre for Law and Global Justice. They will respond to a defined need expressed by legal academics in Kenya and Ghana and build on previous workshops held in 2018 and 2019. They will support the work of early career academics who have ambitions to cultivate wider professional networks and benefit from opportunities to collaborate internationally. They will not involve any air travel. The application instead directs all resources to African law schools. Following significant work internally at the British Academy, it is now allowed under the scheme to direct funds to global south co-PIs. The time of our co-PIs is fully costed. We will use our funding to cover the costs of data packages enabling wider participation from colleagues who are in remote locations and provide bursaries for childcare. In-person events in Accra and Nairobi will enable participants to meet as a cohort and discuss the progress of their work, with UK-based colleagues joining virtually.

The proposed workshops will be an innovation on our previous two successful rounds in 2018 and 2019. This time, the workshops will be organised by field of study, with each set of participants having access to a UK-based academic colleague whose specialism lies in that field. These legal academic colleagues are all themselves either trained at African law schools or having longstanding connections with them. Our innovation is to centre African diaspora legal academics in the UK and to provide an opportunity for them to deepen their engagement with early career legal scholars on the continent. UK colleagues will widen their networks and opportunities for international collaboration. Early career participants in African law schools will benefit from the opportunity to work closely with colleagues and to learn of opportunities such as collaboration, research visits, and grants.

This innovation responds to two needs as expressed to us by colleagues. In the UK, diaspora African law colleagues have expressed a strong wish to be involved in the writing workshops and thus to keep up their connections with African law schools. Similarly, Africa-based early career academics have asked to be connected with experts in their field who can play a long-term role not just in relation to the publication of a paper through a writing workshop, but in relation to their wider career aims and strategies.

We have involved nine Africa diaspora subject leads based in UK law schools who are each specialists in a field we know to be of interest to early career scholars in Kenya and Ghana. By connecting colleagues in UK and African law schools, this project will respond to the expressed need for support for the whole ecosystem of an academic career, including support on promotion, research funding, and collaborative projects, as well as publication of papers and monographs whilst ensuring ODA compliance by directing all resources to eligible partners. We emphasise that this is not a fly-in-fly-out project – we are committed to long-term incremental work, resulting in concrete change.

The project will allow us, in collaboration with SLSA, to establish a mentoring network of diaspora African scholars in the UK as part of SLSA's Internationalisation and Global South strategy. Our workshops draw on our deep ongoing connections with African law schools, are underpinned by our knowledge of how African legal education and legal academia work and are co-produced with our African colleagues with whom we share an understanding of the sovereignty of Africa’s own ideas.