School *of* Pan African Studies

Institutional Development Plan

2026 - 2036

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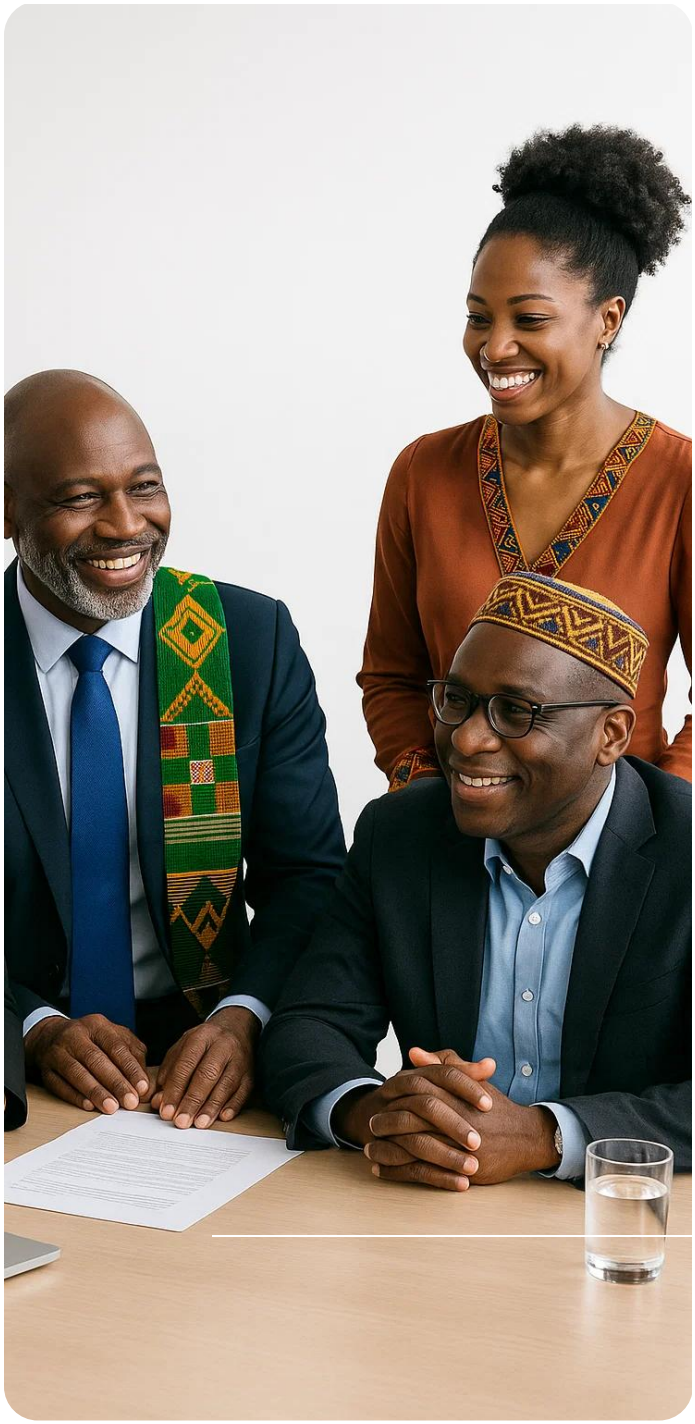
Building Africa through Knowledge, Diaspora, and Innovation



To our partners in government, we implore:

Invest in your future human capital.

To our colleagues in academia we encourage:

Collaborate to build a new knowledge economy.

To the private sector we advise:

Education is the greatest return on investment Africa can offer.

To our diaspora, we promise:

Your brilliance belongs home – bring it back, not as charity, but as legacy.

Message from Our Founder

Nigel Stewart
Principal and Executive Director
School of Pan African Studies

In every generation, there arises a defining moment – a point where vision must meet courage, and conviction must become institution. For Africa and its global family, that moment is now.

The School of Pan African Studies (SPAS) was founded from a simple but radical conviction: that Africa can no longer afford to be the subject of other people's stories, theories, or institutions. We must build our own centres of learning and thought – rooted in our heritage, responsive to our present, and resolutely focused on shaping our collective future.

Across the continent and its vast diaspora, we possess every ingredient of greatness – knowledge, creativity, and resilience. Yet, too often, our talents are scattered and our potential under-leveraged. The challenge before us is not a deficit of intellect or will, but a deficit of connection and investment. SPAS exists to close that gap – to bring together the intellectual power of the diaspora and the developmental urgency of the continent in a single, unifying institution.

Our mission is to reimagine how Africa learns and leads – to produce graduates who not only excel academically but who shape systems, policies, and industries across Africa and the world. We believe that education must be more than the transfer of information; it must be the transformation of society.

This Institutional Development Plan (2025–2035) is our roadmap for the next decade. It outlines how we will grow from vision to infrastructure, from concept to community, and from aspiration to measurable impact. Over ten years, SPAS will establish a network of academic hubs connecting Africa to its diaspora – a new kind of university ecosystem, digitally connected, financially sustainable, and intellectually independent.

We will invest in knowledge production that speaks from Africa's experience, not just about it. We will train leaders who think critically, act ethically, and build collectively. We will work hand in hand with governments, universities, philanthropists, and industry to ensure that African education becomes the foundation of African development – not an afterthought of global priorities.

But this vision cannot be realised by SPAS alone. It requires bold partnerships – from those who believe that the future of humanity depends on a balanced and equitable world of knowledge. The task before us is to turn remittances into research, solidarity into structure, and inspiration into institution.

SPAS is not just a school; it is a movement - one that seeks to restore Africa's intellectual sovereignty, harness the global African imagination, and shape the future of learning itself.

This decade will define the next century of African development. Let it be remembered as the decade when we chose to believe in ourselves – and built the institutions that proved we were right to.

Join us in this work. Partner with us to build the world's leading Pan-African institution for education, research, and leadership. Together, we can ensure that the story of African progress is written not in the margins of history, but at the very centre of global transformation..

Introduction

Africa stands at a defining crossroads. Home to the world's youngest population, it is also the region with the lowest higher education participation rate – less than 10%, compared with the global average of 38%. Each year, the continent loses over $4 billion through skilled migration, as its brightest minds seek opportunities abroad.[1]

Yet across Africa and the diaspora lies immense potential: billions in remittances, rising digital connectivity, and a renewed commitment to African–led development under the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2026–2035).

The School of Pan African Studies (SPAS) was created to harness that potential – uniting Africa's human capital with its global diaspora to build a new model of higher education for the 21st century.

Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision: Become the leading Pan-African institution for **education, research, and leadership development.**

Mission: To reimagine how Africa learns and leads through its own knowledge systems.

Core Values

Oneness
upholding the principles of justice, freedom and fairness for all people as part of the human family.

Integrity & Professionalism
Working to maintain trust that we will do what we say to a high standard.

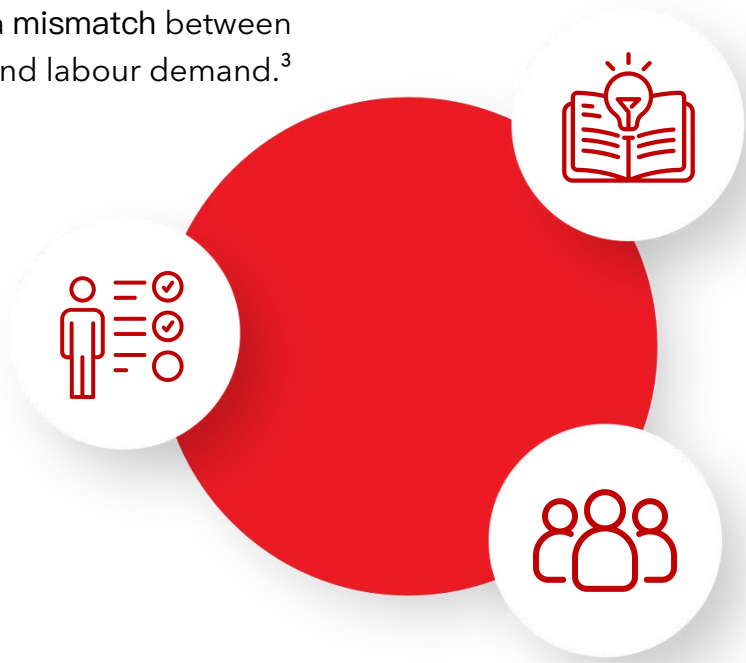
Critical Thinking & Intellectualism
Valuing the diversity and exploration of intellectual ideas upheld by empirical analysis.

SPAS is a diaspora–led, Africa–centred institution. Its purpose is not simply to educate, but to **empower** - producing graduates who think critically, act ethically, and lead transformational change.

Context and Challenge

Across Africa, the gap between talent and opportunity continues to widen.

Up to 70% of graduates report a mismatch between skills and labour demand.[3]



Only **9% of youth** access tertiary education.[2]

Meanwhile, the African diaspora, now exceeding 200 million, remits over $100 billion annually, yet less than 2% supports academic or research capacity.[4]

The result is a cycle of dependency, brain drain, and underinvestment in Africa's most critical asset: its people. At the SPAS we aim to break this cycle and transform education from a site of dependency into a platform of self determination.

Opportunities

Africa's demand for higher education is surging.

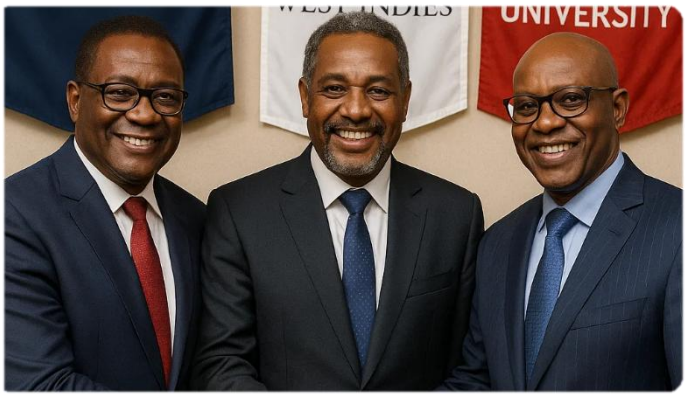
By 2030, the number of university age Africans (18–24) will exceed 140 million[1]. Africa's demographic dividend, digital revolution, and diaspora capital create an unprecedented opening for renewal.

The e-learning market in Africa is projected to surpass $5 billion by 2030.[5]

Mobile internet penetration is expanding by 12% annually.[6]

Governments across the continent are prioritising human capital as the engine of economic growth.[7]

SPAS leverages these shifts to create a Pan–African digital education ecosystem, accessable across geographies languages, and socioeconomic boundaries.



Our Pillars

SPAS is built on seven interconnected pillars.
Through these pillars, SPAS aspires to become a Pan-African hub of knowledge production and leadership formation.

1. Bridging the Skills Gap and Reversing Brain Drain

SPAS will provide advanced, practice-oriented programmes in leadership, policy, and innovation - directly aligned with Africa's labour market and development priorities.

2. Harnessing Diaspora Contributions

The African diaspora contributes over USD 100 billion annually in remittances (AU 2024). SPAS will create structured opportunities for diaspora professionals to invest in careers, mentorship students and institutional funding.

3. Advocating Epistemic Justice

Through research, publications, and thought leadership, SPAS will advance the decolonisation of knowledge and challenge Western epistemic dominance. The School will promote African methodologies, histories, and philosophies as foundations for sustainable development.

4. Strengthening African Union—Diaspora Relations

SPAS supports the African Union's recognition of the diaspora as the "Sixth Region." By aligning its programmes with Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25 and 26–35), SPAS positions itself as a key educational partner in the AU ecosystem.

5. Reconnecting the Diaspora with African Heritage

Education will be used as a bridge for cultural reconnection. SPAS will offer heritage and identity-based learning for diaspora students, including short courses on African history, governance, and social development.

6. Unified Pan–African Identities

SPAS will create spaces for cross-continental collaboration through conferences, joint research, and alumni networks.
This approach reinforces the notion of Pan-Africanism as a living and practical idea.

7. Challenging Global Inequalities

SPAS recognises that knowledge inequality underpins global economic inequality. Its long-term goal is to build independent, African-led global institutions that compete intellectually and ethically with the world's leading universities and think tanks.

Strategic Goals

SPAS's strategy combines digital scalability with institutional depth, balancing innovation alongside sustainable financial decision making.

Strategic Area	2026—2028 (Foundation)	2029—2032 (Growth)	2033—2036 (Impact)
Student Enrolment	2,000 learners	10,000 learners	25,000 learners
Research Centres	2 pilot centres	6 established	10 fully accredited
Publications	50 outputs	200 outputs	500 outputs
Endowment	£10M seed	£30M growth	£50M consolidation
Policy Influence	3 country partnerships	10 country programmes	20+ national reforms

Phase I (2026—2028)

We will develop our foundation and institutionalisation, with focus on legal establishment, governance, new partnerships, curriculum design, and seed funding.

Phase II (2029—2032)

We will expand and develop institutional recognition, with a focus on student growth, research output, policy visibility, and scaling our endowment.

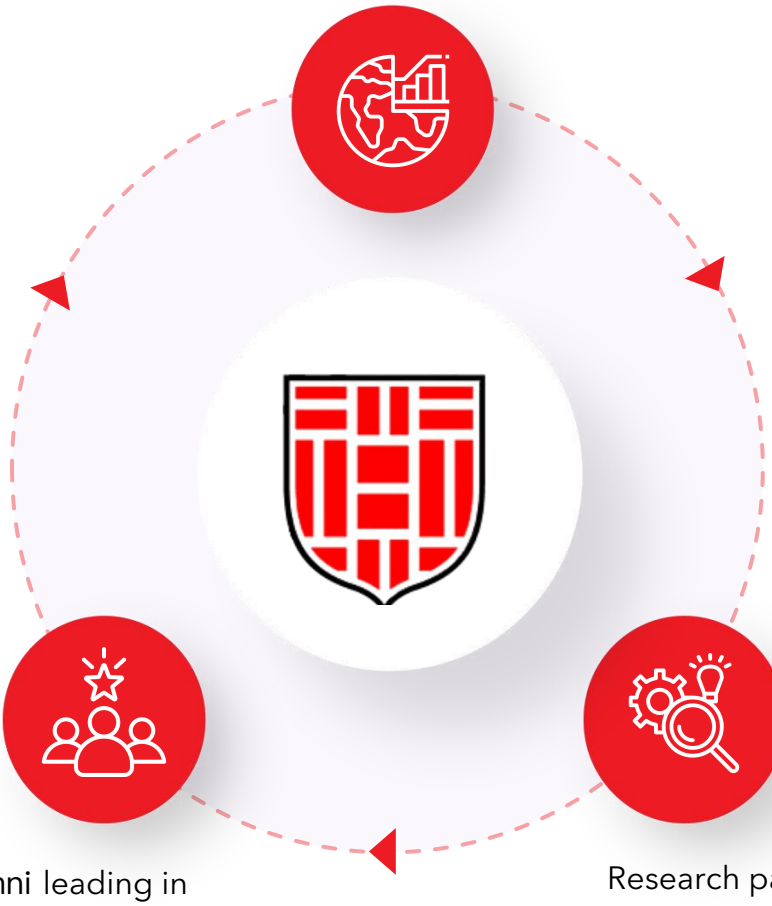
Phase III (2033—2036)

We will consolidate for global impact and focus on sustainable operations, continental influence, and diaspora integration.

Economic and Social Impact

SPAS will measure its success by the transformation it catalyses. Each graduate represents a multiplier of impact - transferring knowledge, shaping industries, and mentoring the next generation of African leaders. Education, in this vision, is not a cost but an investment in Africa's economic sovereignty.

£5 billion cumulative GDP contribution by 2036.[8]



10,000 alumni leading in government, enterprise, and civil society.

Research partnerships driving policy innovation and inclusive growth.

Partnerships and Collaboration

SPAS is anchored in collaboration. Our strategic partners include:

The African Union, AfDB, and regional blocs such as ECOWAS and CARICOM.

Global universities in the UK, US, and Caribbean for joint 16 programmes and faculty exchange.

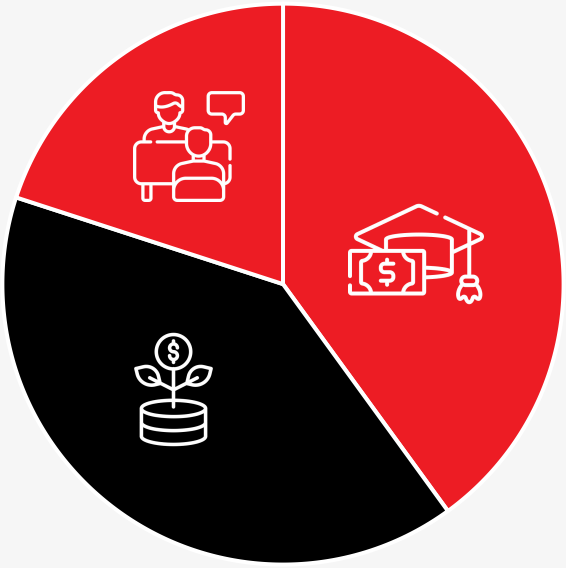
Industry and innovation networks driving applied research and entrepreneurship.

By 2035, SPAS aims to build 10 global hubs connecting academia, enterprise, and policy reform across the African world.

Financial and Development Framework

SPAS operates a hybrid funding model designed for **resilience and growth.**

Initial capitalisation of **£10 million (2026—2028)** will seed the endowment and infrastructure. By 2035, the goal is a **£50 million institutional fund** ensuring long-term sustainability and academic freedom.



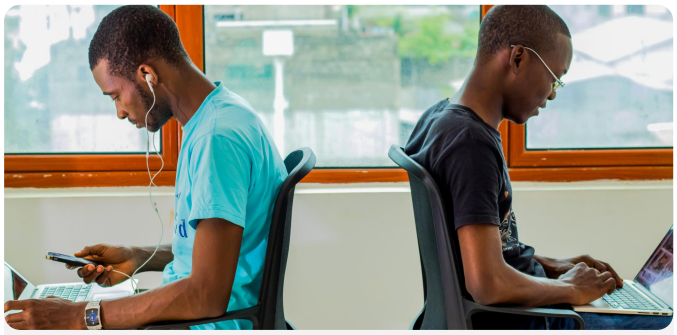
- Tuition Revenue: 40%
- Endowment & Philanthropy: 40%
- Advisory and Research Services: 20%

Our Call to Action

The decade ahead will determine Africa's place in the global knowledge economy. SPAS is not simply asking for support – it is offering a partnership in history–making.

SPAS stands as a bridge between continents, a platform for innovation, and a movement for intellectual liberation. Together, we can ensure that Africa no longer imports its future – it builds it.

To governments,we say:
Invest in the institutions that will define your nations' future.



To philanthropists and investors:
Empower Africa's youth by funding its intellect.

To the diaspora:
Turn remittances into research and solidarity into structure.

Footnotes

[1] OECD (2024); World Bank (2024) – Migration and Brain Drain Data. [2] UNESCO (2024) – Global Education Monitoring Report. [3] World Bank (2024) – Skills Mismatch Report. [4] African Union (2024) – State of the African Diaspora Report. [5] Statista (2024) – Global E-Learning Market Forecast. [6] GSMA (2024) – Mobile Economy Africa Report. [7] AfDB (2024) – Human Capital Outlook. [8] AfDB Data Lab (2035 projection) – Human Capital Development Model.

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