

Chinasa T. Okolo, Ph.D.

www.chinasatokolo.com

Research Interests	AI governance & policy, AI literacy, human-centered AI, explainable AI, data economies, African development, global health	
Education	Cornell University , Ithaca, NY <i>Doctor of Philosophy</i> , Computer Science <i>Master of Science</i> , Computer Science	2018 – 2023
	Pomona College , Claremont, CA <i>Bachelor of Arts</i> , Computer Science	2014 – 2018
Selected Fellowships, Honors, and Awards	Forbes Under 30 TIME100 Most Influential People in AI MIPAD Global Top Futurist & Innovator Trailblazers in Engineering Rising Stars in Management Science & Engineering ICICLE Educational Fellow , National Science Foundation Bouchet Graduate Honor Society Scholar , Cornell University Distinguished Leadership in Service Award , Cornell Bowers CIS Provost Diversity Fellowship , Cornell Graduate School LEAP Alliance Dissertation Fellowship , Google Community Outreach Award , Cornell Graduate School 100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics™ blackcomputeHER Fellow , blackcomputeHER.org John Postel Scholar , North American Network Operators Group UNCF Oracle Academy Fellow , Oracle Corporation Graduate Dean’s Scholar , Cornell University GEM Fellowship , The National GEM Consortium	Dec 2024 Sep 2024 May 2024 Jul 2023 May 2023 May 2023 Jan 2023 Nov 2022 Oct 2022 Sep 2022 May 2022 Dec 2021 Mar 2020 Aug 2019 Jul 2019 May 2019 Apr 2019
Publications	My full list of publications is available on Google Scholar.	
	Chinasa T. Okolo and Mubarak Raji. “The Majority World in Global AI Governance”. To appear in the <i>Handbook on the Global Governance of AI</i> . Edited by Markus Furendal and Magnus Lundgren. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025.	
	Chinasa T. Okolo and Marie Tano. “Moving Toward Truly Responsible AI Development in the Global AI Market.” <i>TechTank. The Brookings Institution</i> , 2024.	
	Hongjin Lin, Naveena Karusala, Chinasa T. Okolo , Catherine D’Ignazio, and Krzysztof Gajos. “‘Come to us first’: Centering Community Organizations in Artificial Intelligence for Social Good Partnerships.” <i>In the Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction (PACM)</i> , 2024.	
	Chinasa T. Okolo and Hongjin Lin. “Explainable AI in Practice: Practitioner Perspectives on AI for Social Good and User Engagement in the Global South.” <i>In the ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO)</i> , 2024.	
	Chinasa T. Okolo . “Examining the Capabilities and Risks of Advanced AI Systems.” <i>TechTank. The Brookings Institution</i> , 2024.	
	Chinasa T. Okolo . “Operationalizing Comprehensive Data Governance in Africa.” To appear in the <i>African Journal of Sustainable Development (AJSD) Special Issue: “Redefining African Futures: The State, Resilience, and Pathways to Progress,”</i> 2024.	

Chinasa T. Okolo. “African Democracy in the Era of Generative Disinformation: Challenges and Countermeasures against AI-Generated Propaganda.” In *the Building a Just AI Ecosystem in Africa Conference*, Research ICT Africa, 2024.

Kadijatou Diallo, Jonathan Smith, **Chinasa T. Okolo**, Dorcas Nyamwaya, Jonas Kgomo, and Richard Ngamita. “African Case Studies in AI Policy Development.” In *the Data for Policy Conference*. Cambridge University Press, 2024.

Charles Asiegbu and **Chinasa T. Okolo.** “How AI is Impacting Policy Processes and Outcomes in Africa.” TechTank. The Brookings Institution, 2024.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “Beyond AI Hype: A Hands-on Workshop Series for Enhancing AI Literacy in Middle and High School Students.” In *the Conference for Research on Equity and Sustained Participation in Engineering, Computing, and Technology (RESPECT)*, 2024.

Chinasa T. Okolo and Hongjin Lin. “‘You can’t build what you don’t understand’: Practitioner Perspectives on Explainable AI in the Global South.” In *the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)*, 2024.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “Reforming Data Regulation to Advance AI Governance in Africa.” Foresight Africa. The Brookings Institution, 2024.

Chinasa T. Okolo*, Dhruv Agarwal*, Aditya Vashistha, Nicola Dell. “‘If it is easy to understand then it will have value’: Examining Perceptions of Explainable AI with Community Health Workers in Rural India.” In *the Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction (PACM)*, 2024.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “AI in the Global South: Opportunities and challenges towards more inclusive governance.” TechTank. The Brookings Institution, 2023.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “Addressing Global Inequity in AI Development.” *Handbook of Critical Studies of Artificial Intelligence*. Edward Elgar Publishers, 2023.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “The Promise and Perils of Generative AI: Case Studies in an African Context.” In *the African Conference for Human Computer Interaction (Africhi)*, 2023.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “Towards a Praxis for Intercultural Ethics in Explainable AI.” In *the Many Worlds of AI Conference*, 2023.

Chinasa T. Okolo, Kehinde Aruleba, and George Obaido. “Challenges to Effective AI Adoption and Implementation in Africa.” *Responsible AI in Africa - Challenges and Opportunities*, pp 35-64. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2023.

Chinasa T. Okolo, Nicola Dell, and Aditya Vashistha. “Making AI Explainable in the Global South: A Systematic Review.” In *the Conference on Computing and Sustainable Societies (COMPASS)*, 2022.

Chinasa T. Okolo. “Optimizing Human-centered AI for Healthcare in the Global South.” *Patterns*, 100421. Cell Press, 2022.

Chinasa T. Okolo, Srujana Kamath, Nicola Dell, and Aditya Vashistha. “‘It cannot do all of my work’: Community Health Worker Perceptions of AI-Enabled Mobile Health Applications in Rural India.” In *the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)*, 2021.

Selected Presentations

My full list of talks is available on my academic website.

Broadening Perspectives on African Governance in the Era of AI

- Harvard University, Cambridge, MA Jan 2025
- Autonomous Innovation Summit, Remote Jan 2025
- University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa Nov 2024
- ACM ICAIF AI in Africa Workshop, Remote Nov 2024
- Wharton Lauder Institute Africa Regional Seminar, Philadelphia, PA Oct 2024
- Michigan AI Seminar, Ann Arbor, MI Oct 2024

Globalizing Perspectives on AI Governance: Africa's Role in International AI Cooperation

- Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. Mar 2024
- University of Florida, Gainesville, FL Feb 2024
- University of Texas, Austin, TX Feb 2024
- Harvard/MIT Advancements in Global AI Policy, Virtual Dec 2023
- EquiAI Future of AI Governance Webinar, Virtual Nov 2023

Towards a Digital Frontier: The Next Stage of Africa's AI Startup Ecosystem

- DZGENAI'23, Beni Abbes, Algeria Dec 2023
- AI for Africa/African Startup Conference, Algiers, Algeria Dec 2023

AI Explainability in the Global South: Towards an Inclusive Praxis for Emerging Technology Users

- University of Maryland AI Seminar, College Park, MD Mar 2024
- Georgetown Hoyalytics Seminar, Washington, D.C. Oct 2023
- Pomona College CS Colloquium, Claremont, CA Sep 2023
- Yale Digital Humanities Lab Seminar Series, Virtual Aug 2023

Examining Perceptions of Explainable AI with Community Health Workers in Rural India

- Stanford MS&E Rising Stars Workshop, Stanford, CA May 2023
- MIDAS Future Leaders Summit, Ann Arbor, MI Apr 2023
- Yale Bouchet Conference, New Haven, CT Mar 2023

Making AI Explainable for Novice Technology Users in Low-Resource Settings

- Microsoft Africa Research Institute Seminar, Virtual Mar 2023
- CSRAI Young Achiever Symposium, Virtual Feb 2023
- University of Washington Change Seminar, Virtual Oct 2022
- Ivy Collective Engineering Doctoral Consortium, Philadelphia, PA Oct 2022
- ACM Tapia Doctoral Consortium, Washington, DC Sep 2022
- University of Queensland AI4PAN Seminar Series, Virtual Aug 2022
- Trustworthy AI Workshop at DeepIndaba, Virtual Aug 2022
- Google Research India AI for Social Good Group, Bangalore, India Jul 2022
- Microsoft Technology & Empowerment Seminar, Bangalore, India Jul 2022

Professional Activities and Service	Computing Research Association	Sep 2024 – Present
	Governance Working Group	
	Reviewing and modifying organizational governance processes.	
	Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation & Digital Economy	Dec 2023 – Aug 2024
	Expert Consultant Developing Nigeria’s National AI Strategy and evaluating AI research grants.	
	IEEE Standards Association	Mar 2023 – Present
	Working Group Member, Algorithmic Bias	
	Developing guidelines to address issues of bias in algorithm development.	
	African Union	Jun 2022 – Present
	Drafting Member, AU Continental Strategy on AI	
	Developing a report to guide AI strategy & policy within the African continent.	
	ACM	Jun 2022 – Present
	Member, US Technology Policy Committee	
	Consulting on computing-related policy issues.	
	Mechanism Design for Social Good	Jan 2020 – Jul 2021
	Co-Organizer, Working Group for Development	
	Led projects using technology to address challenges in the Global South.	
Grant Committees	Reviewer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigeria AI Research Scheme (NAIRS) • National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) • Deep Learning Indaba • Lacuna Fund Racial Equity & Health 	
Program Committees	Paper Reviewer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NeurIPS Conference • Data for Policy Conference • ACM CSCW Conference • ACM FAccT Conference • ACM EAAMO Conference • ACM CHI Conference • ACM COMPASS Conference • ACM/IEEE RESPECT Conference 	
	Workshop Paper/Poster Reviewer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous Agents for Social Good Workshop at AAMAS • Workshop on Machine Learning for the Developing World at NeurIPS • Workshop on Mechanism Design for Social Good (MD4SG) • Practical Machine Learning for Developing Countries Workshop at ICLR • ACM Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing Conference 	
	Conference Chair, Session Chair, Volunteer	
	RESPECT Conference (Volunteer), ML4H Symposium (Outreach Co-Chair), ACM EAAMO (Registration Co-Chair), ACM COMPASS (Student Volunteer), ICTD Conference (Student Volunteer), ACM FAccT (Session Chair), Women in Machine Learning Workshop (WiML) at NeurIPS (Volunteer)	

Work Experience

Expert Contributing Writer Feb 2024 – Present
Mila - Quebec AI Institute Remote
Drafting the International AI Safety Report under the leadership of Professor Yoshua Bengio and guidance of the UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

Fellow Aug 2023 – Present
The Brookings Institution Washington, D.C.
Conducting research and policy analysis on AI-related issues in emerging markets.

Graduate Student Success Consultant May 2022 – Jul 2023
Cornell Diversity Programs in Engineering Ithaca, NY
Developed educational and extracurricular programming for underrepresented STEM graduate and postdoctoral students.

Strategic Growth Research Intern Jun 2022 – Dec 2022
Harambeans Remote
Tracked funding updates, investor activity, and venture growth of African startups. Analyzed business models and partnerships to guide organizational restructuring.

HID Health Incubation Intern May 2021 – Aug 2021
Apple Remote
Developed new Responsible AI/ML methodologies for health sensing applications.

Ryan Scholars Graduate Coordinator Aug 2019 – May 2022
Cornell Diversity Programs in Engineering Ithaca, NY
Hosted academic coaching sessions focused on developing goals and action plans centered on academic, personal, and professional success of scholars in the program.

Strategic Advisor May 2020 – May 2021
Doing Good Work in Africa (DOWA) Remote
Formed corporate partnerships with African-based companies, public entities, and NGOs. Connected university students to internship and volunteer opportunities.

TA Development Consultant May 2019 – May 2020
Cornell University College of Engineering Ithaca, NY
Developed and co-facilitated workshops to prepare new graduate and undergraduate TAs for their roles in working with students by learning innovative teaching methods.

Program Assistant Jul 2019
Cornell Diversity Programs in Engineering Ithaca, NY
Assisted program directors and residential assistants for the CURIE Academy summer program. Mentored high school girls interested in pursuing engineering.

Technology Education Intern Sep 2016 – Dec 2016
Pomona Hope Community Center Pomona, CA
Revamped the technology curriculum for K-5 students by introducing computer science concepts in visual programming languages such as Tynker, Blockly, and Lightbot.

Microbiology Laboratory Intern Feb 2015 – May 2015
Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center Pomona, CA
Worked in Point of Care to meet hospital needs such as employee data management, servicing healthcare electronic devices for nurses, and quality control of shipments.

**Research
Experience**

Graduate Research Assistant Jan 2019 – Jul 2023
Cornell University Ithaca, NY

Departments: Computer Science & Information Science

Conducted user studies to understand perceptions and implications of AI in low-resource contexts. Developed explainable AI prototypes to understand important aspects of model decision-making for novice technology users. Secured \$200k in funding for research, writing, and travel.

Africa's Digital Future Fellow Feb 2023 – Mar 2023
E4E Remote

Conducted research on tech policy and AI regulation in Africa in preparation for submission to the UN Global Digital Compact.

Research Intern May 2018 – Aug 2018
Microsoft Research Cambridge, UK

Group: Biological Computation, Mentors: Andrew Phillips, Paul Grant

Developed techniques for understanding information processing in biological systems. Created computational models and domain-specific tools for bacterial quorum sensing.

Research Assistant Sep 2017 – May 2018
Pomona College Claremont, CA

Department: Computer Science, Mentor: Alexandra Papoutsaki

Analyzed gaze prediction and computer vision techniques in eye-tracking library/web applications. Classified training datasets and isolated factors that cause inaccuracy.

NSF REU Student Researcher May 2017 – Aug 2017
Carnegie Mellon University Pittsburgh, PA

Department: Computational Biology, Mentors: Robert Murphy, Joshua Kangas

Used software engineering methodologies to improve the UI/UX of CellOrganizer, a tool used to learn generative models of cell organization and synthesize cell images.

Research Assistant Sep 2015 – Dec 2016
Pomona College Claremont, CA

Department: Neuroscience, Mentor: Elizabeth Glater

Wrote and edited MATLAB code to efficiently track the movement of *Caenorhabditis elegans*. Ran behavioral assays, made LB agar plates, and inoculated bacteria.

HHMI EXROP Fellow Jun 2016 – Aug 2016
Columbia University New York, NY

Departments: Neuroscience, Physiology, Mentor: Michael N. Shadlen

Crafted experiments to test visual perception and decision-making in human and non-human primates by tracking eye movements and response time to visual stimuli.

NSF REU Student Researcher May 2015 – Aug 2015
The University of Georgia Athens, GA

Departments: Computer Science, Infectious Diseases, Mentor: Shannon Quinn

Used computational methods to advance analysis of organellar network evolution to detect changes in morphology of epithelial lung cells.

Teaching Experience	<p>Graduate Teaching Assistant Aug 2018 - Aug 2019 Cornell University Ithaca, NY Taught discussion sections and occasional lectures. Hosted office hours and coordinated project grading with other class TAs and undergraduate consultants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS 1112, Introduction to Computing with MATLAB Fall 2018 • CS 2110, Object-Oriented Programming and Data Structures Summer 2019 <p>Collaborative Learning Facilitator Jun 2019 – Aug 2019 Cornell University Ithaca, NY Facilitated recitations and tutored students in the Fundamental Programming Concepts (CS 1109) course.</p>
Coursework	<p>Graduate Level (Computer Science): Advanced Systems; Computer Vision; Advanced Artificial Intelligence; The Structure of Information Networks; Data Science for Social Change</p> <p>Graduate Level (Information Science): Health & Computation; Information, Society, & Technology; Technology for Underserved Communities, Design Research</p> <p>Graduate Level (Business & Management): Business & Management Fundamentals for STEM Graduate Students; Entrepreneurship for Scientists and Engineers; AI Strategy & Applications; Technology Strategy; Entrepreneurial Strategy for Technology Ventures</p>
Leadership and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIS Director of Diversity & Inclusion Search Nov 2020 – Jan 2021 Organized graduate student interviews with candidates. • Computer Science Task Force on Fighting Racism Jul 2020 – May 2021 Advised the Task Force on ways to foster inclusion of Black community members. • Computer Science Dean Search Committee Jul 2020 – Aug 2020 Participated in the dean search for the Computer Science Department. • CS Graduate Admissions Committee Nov 2019 – Jan 2023 Reviewed PhD applications and mentored prospective students during departmental visit days. • CodeAfrique Graduate Mentor Dec 2019 – Jan 2020 Taught Ghanaian high school and undergraduate students introductory computer science concepts. • Cornell Graduate Student Ambassador Nov 2019 – Jul 2023 Participated in recruitment events and mentored prospective students. • SOSA Project Lead Oct 2019 – May 2021 Organized and implemented menstrual health workshops in Nigeria to teach feminine hygiene and reusable pad construction to primary school girls. • Black in AI Sep 2019 – Present Mentoring prospective graduate (MS/PhD) applicants and assisting with graduate school application prep information sessions. • CIS Diversity Committee Mar 2019 – May 2020 Implemented solutions to improve recruitment & retention in graduate programs.