

Annual Report

2022-2023



Thematic Framework

The academic year 2022-23 was our first “Covid-free” year since 2018-19. During this period, **Columbia Global Centers | Tunis** hosted or co-hosted 32 events, between workshops, lectures, and webinars. The topics were diverse: health and medicine; humanities, arts and social sciences; migration studies; artificial intelligence; education and sustainable education; cinema studies; robotics; climate; urban studies; etc. We also received 19 Columbia faculty and 57 undergraduate and graduate students. In the next few pages, you can find more information about the productive year we have had, and join us to think about our world and its future.



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From Our Leadership

Letter from the Executive Vice President

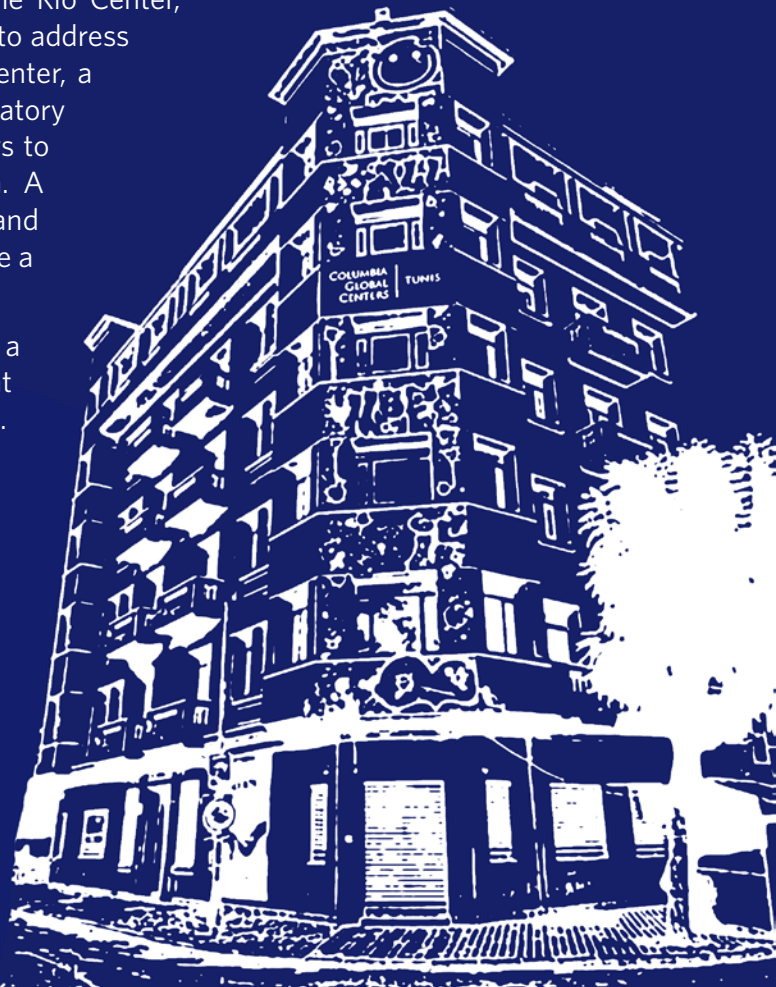
At Columbia Global, we firmly believe that for progress to occur in addressing major societal challenges, it will require coming together across geographic and institutional boundaries, united in mission and guided towards a common purpose. Our Global Centers, located in eleven major cities on four continents, are critical in this endeavor. They connect the university's scholars, researchers, and students with partners worldwide to address such challenges. How? By embracing curiosity, diversity of thought, global perspectives and catalyzing innovations. And through this achieve social impact that transforms lives and communities.

This past year has been challenging for so many. Communities are suffering through extreme heat, unseasonable hurricanes, earthquakes, and flooding. Democracies are under threat across the globe. According to the Economist's Democracy Index, this is the 16th consecutive year of decline in global freedoms, with a decline in the number of fully democratic countries. Alarming, too, is the dramatic increase in displaced populations, many due to wars, climate disruptions and economic despair—reaching new heights.

Yet, in the midst of such overwhelming challenges, there are reasons for hope, as Columbia faculty, students and staff work hand-in-hand with partners around the world advancing inquiry and pursuing solutions together. Our Global Centers embody this ethos. Witness the Amman Center, which is welcoming another group of displaced scholars. Providing refuge and the chance for academic pursuit and continuity amidst turmoil and loss is no small thing. And through a unique partnership between the City of Rio de Janeiro and the Rio Center, concerted educational and research efforts are ongoing to address the consequences of climate change. At the Nairobi Center, a geologist from Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory is working with Kenyan land use experts on finding ways to protect the coastal resources along the Indian Ocean. A similar frisson occurs among students from Istanbul and Tunis, who are uniting through our centers there to define a curriculum for global citizenship.

What follows in this annual report is more than a catalog of our yearly achievements. It's a testament to creativity, commitment and partnership. I invite you to delve in, draw inspiration.

Wafaa El-Sadr, MD, MPH, MPA
Executive Vice President, Columbia Global
University Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine
Mathilde Krim-amfAR Chair of Global Health
Director, ICAP at Columbia University
Director, Columbia World Projects
Lead, NYC Pandemic Response Institute
Columbia University



Letter from the Director

This is our first annual report since becoming part of Columbia Global, the university's new initiative to help Columbia leverage its programming and academic excellence to better address complex global issues. This document summarizes our activities during the first "Covid-free" year since 2018-19. This year, we abandoned social distancing and remote working, reopening our Center to Columbia faculty and scholars while reconnecting with our community in Tunisia and the wider North and West African region. The sheer number of events we hosted in 2022-23, the diversity of the topics covered, and the quality of the partnerships built testify to our successful return to in-person operations.

Moreover, this report marks the conclusion of our start-up phase (2018-2023). We have finally reached our cruising altitude. Our impact is visible in Tunisia and Algeria, and our work has extended to other countries in the region, including Libya, Morocco, Senegal, and Ghana. We have constructed a robust network and count among our closest partners some of the most prestigious research and education institutions in the region. We have also connected with many Columbia faculty members interested in North and West Africa, gaining a clearer understanding of the needs of the surrounding academic community.

Over the years, we have positioned ourselves as a hub for the study of humanities, arts, and social sciences (HASS). We have welcomed faculty and students from diverse fields, from art history to political science, from architecture to cinema studies, promoting debates and initiating dialogues in the HASS field. We resumed our research work on migration issues and we are exploring new possibilities in this domain, particularly in light of the recent crises in Northern Africa and the Mediterranean, which have tragically affected thousands of migrants. We continued to serve the needs of the education community, whether students, scholars, or administrators, while increasing our involvement in health-related issues, particularly in the field of human genetics. Additionally, we ventured into new fields, such as robotics and artificial intelligence, with considerable success.

We invite you to review our accomplishments during the academic year 2022-23, participate in our future events and programs, or even consider becoming a partner and a member of the Columbia Global Centers | Tunis community.

Youssef Cherif

GSAS '09

Director, Columbia Global Centers | Tunis

Columbia University

About Columbia Global

Columbia Global was established in July 2022 to leverage the remarkable scholarship, expertise, and resources of Columbia University in addressing the world's most complex challenges. We bring together the university's major global initiatives, such as the Columbia Global Centers, to advance knowledge and foster global engagement through interdisciplinary research, education, collaboration, and action.

Our ambitious goal is to reimagine the 21st century university's role in society—not just as a nexus for learning, but as a catalyst for creativity, innovation, and impact locally and globally. Through Columbia Global, we look to inspire, surprise, and challenge, and in the process turn cutting-edge thinking into transformative doing.



Who We Are

Columbia Global Centers | Tunis serves as a bridge between continents and cultures, linking Columbia University with North and West Africa. Our mission is twofold: to bring American education to our region and to foster a two-way exchange of knowledge. United by the collective efforts of our dedicated team, advisory board, and Faculty Advisory Committee, our center operates as a dynamic hub contributing to the enrichment of our region's intellectual landscape while fostering meaningful connections across borders.

Team



Youssef Cherif
Director



Sahar Sahli
Financial and
Administrative Officer



Mariem Boubaker
Program Associate

Faculty Advisory Committee

Mamadou Diouf

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Kamel Jedidi

John A. Howard Professor of Business, CBS; Vice Chair, CGCT FAC;

Lisa Anderson

James T. Shotwell Professor Emerita of International Relations, Dean Emerita, SIPA;

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Gordon Gray Jr. Senior Lecturer in Arabic Studies in the Department of Middle Eastern, South and Asian and African Studies;

Omar Besbes

Philip H. Geier Jr. Associate Professor of Business, CBS;

Souleymane Bachir Diagne

Professor of French and Philosophy; Director, Institute of African Studies;

Marwa Elshakry

Associate Professor of History, Department of History;

Mohamed Zied Jameleddine

Assistant Professor of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, GSAPP;

Soulaymane Kachani

Senior Vice Provost, Columbia University;

Gregory Mann

Professor of History, Department of History;

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

University Professor, Department of English and Comparative Literature;

Joseph Terwilliger

Professor of Neurobiology, Department of Genetics and Development, Professor of Neurobiology, CUIMC;

Ann Thornton

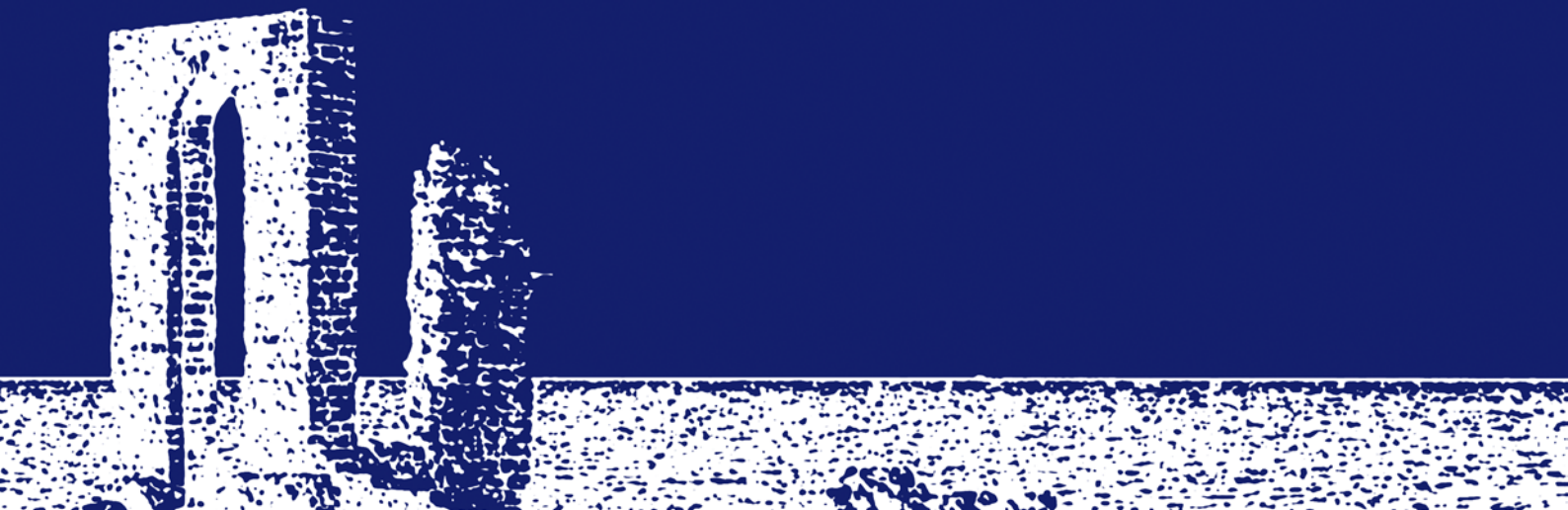
Vice Provost, University Librarian, Columbia University;

Eric Verhoogen

Professor of International and Public Affairs and Economics, Co-Director of the Center for Development Economics and Policy, SIPA;

Portia G. Williams

Associate Provost for International Affairs, Teachers College.



Advisory Board



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Co-Founder and CEO | Value



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Founder | Kamel Lazaar Foundation
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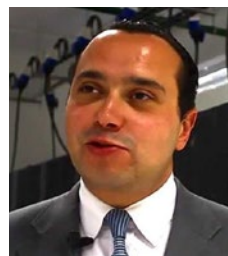
Amel Bouchamaoui
Chairperson | HBG Holding



Ziad Oueslati
Co-Founder and Managing
Director | Africinvest



Radouan Cherif
CEO | Galion



Mehdi Tamarziste
CEO | Meninx Holding

Programming

Health and Medicine

Our work on Health-related topics, which picked-up during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued with regular workshops and lectures. We recorded five online lectures in the **Logical Reasoning in Human Genetics** program, attended virtually by more than 1500 people. These lectures covered diverse topics, like identifying novel genomic variants, genetic contributors to disorders of sexual development, insights into Alzheimer's disease, variability in biological systems, monogenic foundations of retinal and neurological diseases, and the examination of oral microbiota.

We also joined our partner, Institut Pasteur de Tunis, and the global Pasteur Network to organize the **Precision Medicine Academy**, a 2-week transformative initiative that brought together experts, researchers, and practitioners who explored the cutting-edge advancements in precision medicine. Through meetings, lectures, and discussions, we engaged with local hospitals and schools on cancer screening, genomics, biobanking, sequencing, clinical trials, functional genomics, and health data analysis.



Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Uprisings, land of the ancient metropolis of Carthage and the Islamic centers of Kairouan, Mahdia, and Tunis, continues to attract humanities, arts and social sciences scholars and students.

During this academic year, CGC Tunis started a partnership with the Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts (Beit al-Hikma), co-organizing the **2022-23 Inaugural Lecture of the Academy** as well **as a discussion on the business of government** and other meetings.

We also hosted the **Research Ethics in the Middle East and North African Region (REMENA) workshop**, part of a project funded by the Columbia President's Global Innovation Fund (PGIF) and dedicated to developing guidelines for the conduct of responsible, ethical, and constructive social science research in the Middle East and North Africa.

Our collaboration with the University of Manouba, one of Tunisia's largest institutions, flourished this year as well. We joined the **Insaniyyat Tunis 2022 conference**, Manouba's flagship event, as a partner. This event attracted thousands of participants from around the world. We also organized talks and visits involving Columbia faculty and Manouba faculty between our institutions.

Additionally, our Center worked with other international education and research institutes located in Tunisia, such as the Centre d'Etudes Maghrébines à Tunis (CEMAT), the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC), or the Merian Center For Advanced Studies In The Maghreb (MECAM), to organize joint workshops and lectures.

Finally, we increased our collaboration with Columbia University Press (CUP), distributing their latest books -in the fields of humanities, arts, social sciences, and beyond - in Tunisia and hosting conversations with authors, in person and online.





Education

Education continues to be an important pillar of our work. In 2022, we concluded the **TC-Tunisia Foreign Language Teacher Education Project**, a joint training program between Teachers College at Columbia University, Columbia Global Centers | Tunis, the U.S. Embassy Tunis, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Tunisia. As part of this Training of Trainers (ToT) program, 46 Tunisian teachers received four professional development modules which equipped them with in-depth knowledge in planning and assessment, teacher education, integration of knowledge and practice, and more; these tools helped them serve as mentors for future English teachers in elementary schools.

We have built a partnership with the University of Tunis - ISG (Institut Supérieur de Gestion de Tunis) Alumni Association and co-organized their **annual conference**, attended by hundreds of students and successful alumni, on the theme of the social responsibility of the university.

And, as part of the President's Global Innovation Fund (PGIF), we established a partnership with SMU - MSB (South Mediterranean University - Mediterranean School of Business), Columbia Global Centers | Istanbul, and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. Together, we launched the **Youth-led Advocacy Initiative for Global Citizenship, Responsibility, and Cooperation**, focusing on fostering a sense of global citizenship among university students.



In addition, we partnered with the University of Sousse - ENISO (Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs de Sousse) on the topic of robotics and human health. This led to a **workshop** that brought together researchers in the field of robotics and health from both Columbia University and Tunisia, particularly the University of Sousse.



In Sousse as well, we worked with Pristini School of AI and aiphabet for an **Artificial Intelligence Boot Camp** designed for high school students. Over the course of three days, participants were introduced to diverse AI principles, applications, and history.



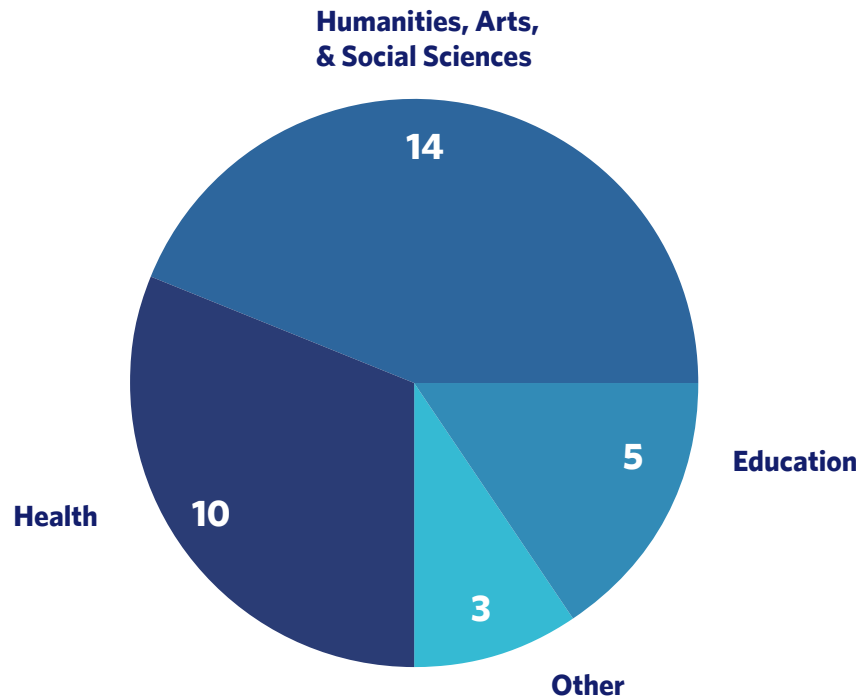
Then, as a hub of North American education in the North and West African region, we continued disseminating information about studying in the US and on how to apply to Columbia University, as well as executive education programs and other opportunities, through information sessions and application links, targeting high school and undergraduate students.

Additionally, CGC Tunis hosted or helped to host graduate Columbia students from the **Department of Art History and Archaeology, the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP),** and Columbia Business School (CBS), whose professors selected Tunisia as a study-abroad location for their courses.

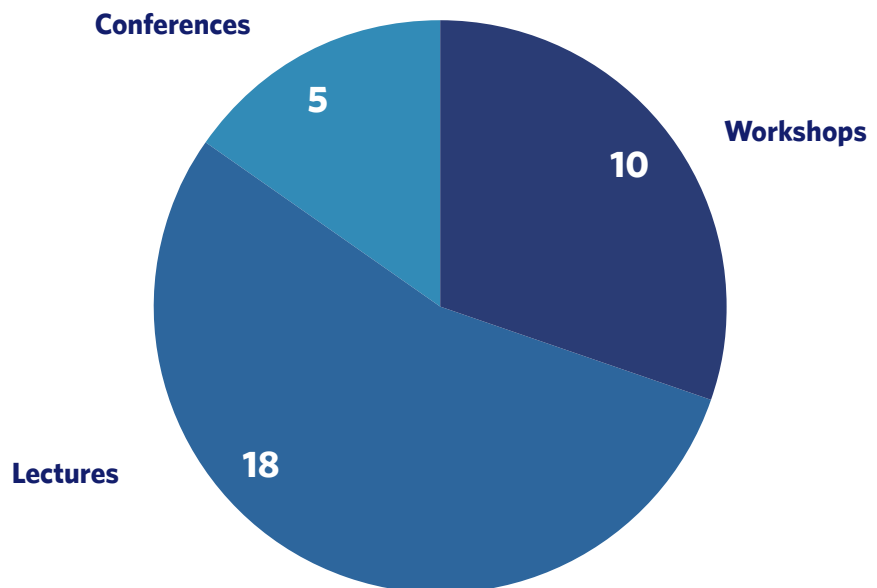


Year in Numbers

Themes



Types



Public Engagement



Total Followers:

7.1 k

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Columbia University Partners



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Looking Ahead


In the next five years, we will lean into the fields where we have seen success and for which we continue to receive demand. These include more educational opportunities, such as training for North and West African universities and schools to improve their administrative, teaching, and research capacities, modeled on our Teachers College-Tunisia Project. They also include opportunities offered by Columbia's executive education programs to help institutions better the skills of their teams and scale their work. We will also continue to develop our health-related initiatives, such as the Logical Reasoning in Human Genetics that we launched with Institut Pasteur Tunis, and spread them beyond Tunisia.


We would like to host more students and researchers interested in the history of the region (starting with Carthage) and its contemporary questions (the Arab Uprisings and social movements, the role of religion, the problem of democracy, etc.). And from the broader field of humanities and social sciences, we will look to foster debates that allow faculty, students, and researchers to help us envision a better future for our region and the world.

That said, we would also like to explore issues that we have only begun to grapple with, such as artificial intelligence and climate change, areas where Columbia can provide a considerable added-value.

We hope you will join us on the exciting journey ahead, as partners, supporters, and voices adding to our understanding of North and West Africa, and the world.

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CENTERS | TUNIS

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