

AERC INSIGHT

The African Economic Research Consortium



News

59th AERC
2023 Biannual
Plenary Session
on African
Economies

Pg.12



Youth Demographic Dividend, Migration, and Economic Opportunities in African Economies



Prof. Dominique Njinkeu
comes back to AERC
as Interim Executive
Director Pg.4



AERC co-hosts session
at the Africa Human
Capital Heads of State
Summit Pg.10



Contents



9

AERC Takes Part in the Africa Climate Summit

10
AERC Co-hosts Session at the Africa Human Capital Heads of State Summit



17
Impact of War in Ukraine Final Review Virtual Workshop



12

AERC hosts the 2023 Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society



44

Christian Mwemezi: My Personal Experience During My CMAP at the University of Ghana 2022 and 2023



62

Fare Thee Well
Dr. Janvier Nkurunziza,
Rashid Mekki Hassan, and
DR. John Randa.

38
Africa Human Capital Institutional Attachment



34
Stipro Hosts a Digital Financial Services Dissemination Workshop



52
The Agriculture, Nutrition and Health 2023 (ANH23) Conference, Malawi



Note From the Interim Executive Director

Dear Readers,

As a member of the AERC community, we are thrilled to welcome you to the latest issue of our newsletter. As the AERC continues to deliver on its mandate across the continent by creating an innovative blend of research, training, and policy outreach activities, it remains a priority for the secretariat to update all its stakeholders on the latest stories, reports, studies, publications, and testimonials.

In this edition, we are keen to share news on the AERC Biannual Research Workshop, a flagship event whose plenary attracts over 300 researchers, academics, policymakers, non-state actors and economists. The event provides a forum for participants to interact with a global network of professionals to discuss issues relevant to Africa's economic development. Other stories featured include AERC thematic and collaborative research projects, training activities, including joint facilities for electives, events AERC is featured in, like the exciting session at the Third Edition of the African Conference on Debt and Development (AfCoDD III), new publications as well as success stories from esteemed members of the AERC network family. We also present in this edition inspiring stories about our alumni network members. These are fellows who have benefited from the AERC capacity-building programmes,

As the end of the year is fast approaching, the AERC is already embarking on a major overhaul of its operations to remain relevant and to move with the times. This has been one of my priorities as the interim executive director.



and in this regard, we feature Christian Mwemezi's personal experience during his Collaborative Master's Programme (CMAP) at the University of Ghana.

As the end of the year is fast approaching, the AERC is already embarking on a major overhaul of its operations to remain relevant and move with the times. This has been one of my priorities as the interim executive director. It includes a more innovative resource mobilisation strategy, a more customer-oriented operations strategy and a more inclusive talent management structure within the secretariat and the network. As the digital revolution is in full swing across the continent, you will find through our articles, how the AERC training and research programmes have evolved to ensure that our researchers and students remain in touch with the latest trends across the industry.

We hope you enjoy this new edition and also welcome your feedback as well as suggestions of topics you'd like to see in future newsletters at communications@aercafrica.org. We encourage you to share this edition with your friends on social media channels.

Thank you for your continued support.

Welcome!

Prof. Dominique Njinkeu
Executive Director (Interim), AERC

Prof. Dominique Njinkeu

Comes Back to AERC as Interim Executive Director

Prof. Dominique Njinkeu was recently appointed the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Interim Executive Director. This announcement was made by Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, the Chairman of the AERC Board of Directors, during a meeting with AERC staff on August 8, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. Prof. Njinkeu was warmly received by AERC staff members who pledged their full support to him.

The board has been working closely with staff and senior management on a transition programme following the resignation of Prof. Théophile Azomahou on August 10, 2023. The plan involved the recruitment of an interim Executive Director to continue steering the organisation. Prof. Aryeetey stated that the board is committed to ensuring that the impact of AERC's work is sustained across Africa and lauded all the esteemed stakeholders and network members for their continued trust and cooperation.

Prof. Njinkeu is an International Consultant and Director of the African Trade and Sustainable Development, a Washington DC Metro-based consulting firm undertaking policy analysis and providing advisory services to governments, regional economic communities, and development agencies in low-income countries, particularly in Africa.

Prof. Njinkeu is an International Consultant and Director of the African Trade and Sustainable Development, a Washington DC Metro-based consulting firm undertaking policy analysis and providing advisory services to governments, regional economic communities, and development agencies in low-income countries, particularly in Africa. He was previously the Lead Trade Facilitation Specialist and Program Manager of the World Bank Group Trade Facilitation Facility, World Bank in Washington DC. From 2003 to 2009, Prof. Njinkeu was the Executive Director at the International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty (ILEAP) in Toronto, Canada.

He has previous experience with the AERC, having worked as the Deputy Director of Research between 1998 and 2003. He also serves as a Resource Person within the AERC Thematic Research Programme. Prof. Njinkeu comes back to the AERC as a well-known and highly-respected member of the Network.

AERC Biannual Research Workshop December 2023: Youth Demographic Dividend and Economic Opportunities in Africa

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) will host its 59th Plenary Session on “*Youth Demographic Dividend and Economic Opportunities in Africa*”. Over 100 researchers, academics, policymakers, non-state actors and economists discussed this topical issue.



An exponentially expanding population of youth can turn into a ticking time bomb or a demographic dividend, depending on how governments respond to this reality. Young people between the ages of 15-35 years provide a productive population continuum that sustains economies and human development across the globe.

According to a recent publication by the United Nations, globally, young people between the ages of 15-24 constitute about 15.5% of the world population with a projected decline to 13.8% in 2050. In Africa, youth aged 15-24 are about 20% of the continent’s population. If we consider those 35 years old and below, they make up about 75% of the population. This population bulge is a double-edged sword for inclusive growth and sustainability or a ticking time bomb on the quest for highly productive livelihoods if not harnessed properly by African governments.

Demographic dividend benefits can be proactively harnessed where young people have adequate employable skills and ready access to decent employment, thus reducing dependency on the working-age population. In 2016, the

African Union suggested the pathways of strategic investments that were critical to maximising the demographic dividend for the African continent. The pathways consist of four pillars: employment and entrepreneurship; education and skills development; health and well-being; and rights, governance and empowerment. However, achieving the pillars is proving to be challenging for African economies. With recent emerging shocks such as COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, global economic downturn, climate shocks and brain drain due to lack of economic opportunities, improving livelihoods for the youth and the quest to attain demographic dividends is a long shot.

Youth migration for education and job opportunities within countries and outside Africa may seem to relieve pressure for job creation and also provide remittances in the continent, however, the brain drain is

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15.5%



According to a recent publication by the United Nations, globally, young people between the ages of 15-24 constitute about 15.5% of the world population with a projected decline to 13.8% in 2050.



debated through various lenses. One of the arguments for youth engagement in the productive sectors of the economy is the development of employable skills. With a well-endowed human capital development through access and affordable education, training and healthcare, Africa has a high feasibility of a positive growth trajectory. As such, well-educated and healthy individuals with diverse skills are likely to participate in highly valued economic activities thus boosting economic development prospects. However, while in recent times African countries have invested in the education of their young people, access still remains a challenge due to the escalating cost of education as a commodity and the conducive infrastructure to enable effective learning. The problem is more pronounced among the different genders, where there are more opportunities available for boys than girls. With an exponentially growing population, rapid urbanisation, technology and globalisation, African economies

have to be more sensitive in harnessing untapped demographic dividends.

There are emerging suggestions on fronting human capital development to enhance youth skills to nurture employability and entrepreneurship, a viable instrument in propelling growth prospects in the developing world. For instance, facilitating access to affordable, basic and tertiary education, along with implementing digital and open learning mechanisms, will be fundamental in improving accessibility. Additionally, ensuring affordable healthcare, particularly in reproductive health, for young men and women is crucial.

Aligning the education curriculum to embody science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses is likely to spur innovativeness and ingenuity in young people, thus creating jobs in the digital space and the manufacturing sector. Furthermore, fostering functional and practical learning in the arts and enhancing creativity in young people can be achieved by investing in a curriculum rich in performing arts, visual arts and design, sports, culinary arts, and other creative fields. There have been notable developments in enhancing the uptake of technical and vocational training with a rise from 1.4% to 2.4% between 2012 and 2017. There is progress in youth participation in employment for the ages 15-24 years, but more needs to be done for more assimilation in the job markets.

With over 75% of the African population under 35 years old, the dependency level on a few workers above that age is nothing glorious but a sad state of affairs for African economies. Youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults across the globe. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the youth unemployment rate in Africa is conspicuously below the world average by about 2%. However, reliance on the youth unemployment rate does not give the full story, as it does not cover the employment quality. Many more are working in non-decent jobs, hence increasing vulnerability. The African Development Bank has projected that by 2025 more than 263 million young people may be economically vulnerable.

The African continent is on the verge of envisioning pathways and mechanisms that foster a conducive environment for tangible policy solutions, facilitating young people's inclusion and sustainable participation in the economic prosperity of the African continent.

75%

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263 million

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something to worry about. The opportunity cost of migration may outweigh the short-term benefits to African economies, if not checked. The context of migration may take several forms: deficit rural-urban migration, where able-bodied young men and women leave for opportunities in urban areas, depleting the much-needed human resource for agriculture in the rural areas. With an influx of youth to urban areas, the low skills and shortage of decent labour demand are likely to lead to destitution or precarious living.

The African continent is on the verge of envisioning pathways and mechanisms that foster a conducive environment for tangible policy solutions, facilitating young people's inclusion and sustainable participation in the economic prosperity of the African continent. The paradox of the youth agenda in Africa can be

AERC Hosts the 2023 Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted the 2023 Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society (AFES 2023) in Nairobi, Kenya, from June 1 to 3, 2023. A high-level panel discussion on Adam Smith's Tercentenary Commemoration marked the climax of this conference.



The main speakers in the official opening session were Hon. Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, the Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury & Economic Planning, Kenya, who delivered the keynote speech; Prof. Esther Duflo, the 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, while the welcoming and opening remarks were by Prof. Théophile T. Azomahou, former Executive Director, AERC. Prof. Rosa Lilianna Matzkin, the Charles E. Davidson Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), also shared her remarks. This session was chaired by Prof. Yaw Nyarko (New York University).

During his opening keynote address at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi, Prof. Ndung'u decried the frustration that economic planning and management

technocrats continue to face due to unreliable data and called for concerted efforts among policymakers in Africa and beyond to address the challenge of current, credible, and reliable data access in economic planning. "The need for

"The need for adequate economists, statisticians, and econometricians, who are dependable, and available on a timely basis, is widespread regionally and internationally. In many of our African countries, National Accounts Statistics and Monetary Statistics are usually in arrears."

Hon. Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u

adequate economists, statisticians, and econometricians, who are dependable, and available on a timely basis is widespread regionally, and internationally. In many of our African countries, National Accounts Statistics and Monetary Statistics are usually in arrears. And as a policymaker, I know how frustrating it is to work with scanty or stale data and evidence. So, challenges are enormous in this field," he said.

Prof. Matzkin, who is the President of the Econometrics Society, expressed the need for Africa to be part of the society as part of their contribution to participate in research for economic measurements. She also acknowledged the need to promote well-designed economic proposals.

"Africa now has a seat in the committee, a clear indication of its frontier in research and the good work that the continent and

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its researchers are doing. Any national policy, be it in infrastructure, health, education, fiscal, incomes or monetary policy, in order to be an informed one and most likely to succeed, would require sufficient, reliable, and fresh evidence,” said Prof. Matzkin.

This hybrid meeting takes place on the continent once every year, and it is part of the effort of the Econometric Society to promote research in quantitative economics, and its use in policymaking. The Econometric Society is a very crucial international society for the advancement of economic theory in its relation to statistics and mathematics. The Society is also one of the world’s largest forums of economists, including extremely renowned academics in economics and connected fields.

Six plenary sessions on various topics were held during the conference:

- 1 Plenary Session One:** “Pastoral Population and Paths of Development Presentation” by Nathan Nunn (University of British Columbia). Chair, Dalia Ghanem (University of California, Davis).
- 2 Plenary Session Two:** “Presidential Address on Unobservable in Structural Models” by Rosa Matzkin (University of California, Los Angeles). Chair Dianah Muchai (AERC).
- 3 Plenary Session Three:** “Cheikh Anta Diop: One Hundred Years Later, Still an Intellectual Foundation for African Economic Development” Chair Hippolyte Fofack (Afreximbank).
- 4 Plenary Session Four:** “Persistent Experimentation and the Fight Against Poverty” by Esther Duflo (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Chair Prosper Dovonon (Concordia University).
- 5 Plenary Session Five:** “Institutional Experimentation, Political Agency, and Development” by Léonard Wantchekon (Princeton University). Chair Sophie Osotimehin (University of Quebec at Montreal).
- 6 Plenary Six:** Arthur Lewis Lecture: What would Economics Look Like if Adam Smith had been an African? by James Robinson (University of Chicago). Chair Yaw Nyarko (New York University).

Other distinguished speakers at the conference were Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, chairman of the AERC Board of Directors and The African Research Universities Alliance, University of Ghana, as well as Prof. Kevin Chuka Urama, Vice President/Chief Economist (African Development Bank).

The meeting also featured the Econometric Society Africa Region’s Young Economist Best Paper Award.

This is a competition for the best paper from young economists. The competition is usually open for papers presented in the contributed sessions at the conference by young scholars. The main target of the award is young scholars from underfunded institutions, especially, Africa-based young scholars.

AERC takes part in the

Africa Climate Summit



Participants during the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi.

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in collaboration with Boston University Global Development Policy Centre, Vulnerable Group of Twenty (V20) Ministers of Finance of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and Debt Relief for a Green and Inclusive Recovery (DRGR) Project, hosted a side event on September 5 at the [Africa Climate Summit](#) that took place in Nairobi on September 4 – 8, 2023.

The event organised under the Summit's thematic pillar "Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Risk", addressed issues around the Emergency Coalition for Debt Sustainability and Climate Prosperity, and the alternative frameworks and solutions that can be offered to reform the debt architecture.

The side event that was moderated by Dr. Sara Jane Ahmed, (Finance Advisor to the Vulnerable Group of Twenty (V20) Ministers of Finance of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF)), featured high-level speakers, among them Prof. Abebe Shimeles (African Economic Research Consortium and University of Cape Town), Prof. Kevin Gallagher (Director of the Boston University Global Development Policy Centre and Professor at the Pardee School of Global Studies and Co-Chair of the Debt Relief for a Green and Inclusive Recovery project), and Dr. Brian O'

Callaghan (Senior Advisor, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa).

Prof. Shimeles presented findings from the ongoing collaborative research project on "Evidence to drive reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery" funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The event organised under the Summit's thematic pillar, "Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Risk", addressed issues around the Emergency Coalition for Debt Sustainability and Climate Prosperity, and the alternative frameworks and solutions that can be offered to reform the debt architecture.

(BMGF). The project focuses on countries that have high potential to use SDR allocations for development, but currently face serious debt issues, which include Ghana, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Kenya. Prof. Abebe's paper on *Triple Shocks, Debt Distress and Liquidity Crunch in Africa: Reforming the Architectures of Development Finance*, discussed how climate change-induced shocks erode economic fundamentals if urgent action isn't taken. He observed that most countries have depleted foreign reserves, leading to exchange rate instabilities, inflation, and the rise of informal markets for foreign currencies. He further noted that some African countries have allocated a significant share of their holdings for managing balance of payments challenges in the face of painful debt service burdens and hence reallocating and utilising idle SDR holdings makes important economic sense for the globe.

Prof. Kevin P. Gallagher, on the other hand, presented a paper on *Africa's Inconvenient Truth: Debt Distress and Climate-Resilient Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, and noted that there is an urgent need for climate action in order to address external shocks through increased liquidity, expanding development finance and debt relief among developing countries. While commenting on the presentations, Dr. Callaghan observed that African countries need to strengthen their domestic resource mobilisation to manage their debt.

AERC co-hosts session at the Africa Human Capital Heads of State Summit

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and the African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET) co-hosted a Think Tank knowledge sharing session on **24 July 2023** during the [Africa Human Capital Heads of State Summit](#) at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre (JNICC) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

This summit, hosted by the Government of Tanzania, focused on accelerating Africa's economic growth through addressing learning poverty and skill gaps. The discussions were grounded on the findings from AERC's collaborative research project on Human Capital Development in Africa Project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and ACET's Youth Employment and Skills programme.

The Think Tank knowledge sharing session, chaired by Dr. Dianah Ngui (AERC), featured a presentation based on the Human Capital Development in Africa project by Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, the Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Planning, Kenya and the immediate



former AERC Executive Director, and Prof. Germano Mwabu, a framework paper author and a project steering committee member of the project.

Prof Ndung'u noted that human capital not only directly and indirectly positively



Dan Peters (BMGF) and Prof Njuguna Ndung'u having a discussion after the session.

This summit, hosted by the Government of Tanzania, focused on accelerating Africa's economic growth through addressing learning poverty and skill gaps.

influences economic growth but also matters for employment outcomes and is a vehicle for economic transformation, supports poverty reduction and boosts equity, strengthens institutions, and vice versa. Institutional quality, he also pointed out, affects human capital development and is an accelerator of social cohesion and reduces the drivers of violence, conflict and fragility. While noting this, Prof. Ndung'u observed that sources of human capital formation included investments in early childhood development. This includes prenatal and early child nutrition

and cognitive stimulation. It also involves equitable access to quality healthcare services. Additionally, providing equal access to quality education is a crucial aspect, which comprises high-quality basic education, higher education opportunities, on-the-job training and adult education. Moreover, well-targeted social protection programmes play a significant role in supporting human capital development, including protecting gains made.

In his presentation, Prof. Mwabu observed that policies that improve health and nutrition are an integral part of interventions that address skill and learning deficits, while policies that improve teacher qualifications, school management, and availability of teaching materials are critical inputs into HCD.

The Policy Roundtable distinguished panel moderated by Mona Iddrisu, the head of youth employment and skills at the African Centre for Economic Transformation, featured the following speakers: Prof. Olu Ajakaiye, Chairman, African Centre for Shared Development Capacity Building (ACSDCB), Ibadan; Dr. Marilys Razakamanana, Lecturer and Head of the Research Centre for Development (CRD) at the Catholic University of Madagascar; Prof. Germano Mwabu, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the Department of Economics and Development Studies, University of Nairobi; and Amabelle Nwakanma, Director of Programmes at LEAP Africa.



Panelists during the session: (L-R) Prof. Olu Ajakaiye, Dr. Marilys Razakamanana, Prof. Germano Mwabu, Prof. Germano Mwabu, and Mona Iddrisu.

The roundtable noted that the strategy to close the future learning poverty and skill gaps should be an all-stakeholder affair including providing guides to HCD institutions on curriculum development; supporting the employers of labour on the need to provide opportunities for internships, attachments, and staff training in their establishments; sensitizing the labour unions and



During the Summit, the AERC had the privilege of attending a partners' side event organised by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

CSOs on the imperatives of encouraging high productivity among members and resolving industrial disputes amicably through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and not through industrial actions.

During the Summit, the AERC had the privilege of attending a partners' side event organised by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). Participants in this meeting discussed their efforts to support more and better investment in human capital in sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim of identifying shared priorities and opportunities for collaboration. Speakers representing governments, civil society organisations, and development partners included: Rachel Toku-Appiah, Director, Program Advocacy and Communications, Africa, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (moderator); Finda Koroma, Executive Director, HCD+; Luc Laviolette, Head of Secretariat, Global Financing Facility; Peter Materu, Chief Program Officer, Mastercard Foundation; Albert Nsengiyumva, Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa; and Bobby Stansfield, Africa Human Development Group Head, Pan Africa Department, UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. The speakers emphasised promoting foundational learning within the broader realm of education, improving health, and addressing gender inequalities that prevent women from investing in their human capital and their children's.



Panelists during the Think Tank knowledge sharing session

59th AERC 2023 Biannual Plenary Session on African Economies



Dr. Hippolyte Fofack



Prof. Théophile Azomahou



Prof. Stefan Dercon



Dr. Paul Mpuga

AERC held the 59th Biannual Plenary Session virtually on May 22, 2023. The session was attended by high-level experts and policymakers in Africa. The theme of the session was *'African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks'*. The session was attended by 393 participants, including academia, researchers, resource persons, policymakers, think tanks and network universities from around the world.

The keynote speech was read by Dr. Hippolyte Fofack, Chief Economist and Director of Research (Afrexim Bank), and Prof. Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors (Afrexim Bank). In the speech, the African Export-Import Bank noted that even after regional integration agreements and treaties, the African regional trade has not grown substantially as had been expected. Currently, intra-Africa trade stands at 15.4%, and Africa's share of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) trade is estimated at 2.6%, despite accounting for 16.3% of the world's population. "It is essential for countries to reduce today's debt burden

promptly through economic reform, lowering the cost of financing, and debt restructuring on a case-by-case basis. The international community should also step up efforts to improve debt restructuring processes, including the G20 Common Framework, to ensure that debt relief is delivered in a timely and efficient manner where it is needed," he said. He also noted some notable progress in some sub-regions where integration in trade, finance and labour mobility is improving fast and acknowledged that harnessing the full benefits of Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreements and strengthening the regional integration and regional



Prof. Benedict Oramah



Dr. Chuku Chuku



Prof. Daniel Bradlow



Prof. Kevin Gallagher



Prof. Pramila Krishnan



Dr. Hany Abdel-Latif

Referencing the need to leverage education to produce excellent research as a future goal for more focused impact, the AERC Executive Director, Prof. Théophile Azomahou, encouraged the need to ensure that research is selective and conducted within respective thematic areas.

trade prospects are new avenues for exploiting the limitless opportunities.

Referencing the need to leverage education to produce excellent research as a future goal for more focused impact, the AERC Executive Director, Prof. Théophile Azomahou, encouraged the need to ensure that research is selective and conducted within respective thematic areas.

“Whilst education is inclusive, research should be trained and taught in a manner that encourages our young and upcoming researchers to be more deliberate in their methods by narrowing down topics to be as thematic as possible. This will help build knowledge in different areas of focus for policymakers and help shape solutions to our everyday problems,” he said.

Some of the notable steps discussed as possible solutions for mitigating these multiple shocks include:

- Investing in the transformation of African economies to reduce the unhealthy and credit-rating negative correlation between price and commodity price cycles.
- Investing in the development of capital markets.
- Addressing infrastructure deficits, especially in the power sector, to mitigate the chronic electricity deficit, a significant constraint to productivity growth and industrial output.
- Enhancing the relevance and impact of AERC networks in the policy and development arenas, among others.

Other discussions touched on the fact that close to 60% of Africa’s GDP growth is explained by temporal, cyclical factors, but with large variance across countries. The recovery from the shock that is taking shape now runs the risk of being uneven, widening the differences within Africa itself and between Africa, and the rest of the world. Additionally, in an economic sense, the productivity shocks on agriculture, food security and land productivity due to climate change cannot be taken lightly. There is evidence that

points to increasing poverty and inequality induced by climate change and this is beyond the argument of marginal areas. The commitments by international development partners to finance the climate change initiatives are not coming forth as fast as expected to provide a stopgap to resource challenges in Africa. There are areas where domestic resources can be harnessed, such as creating shallow water wells for pastoralists to minimise conflicts in those marginal areas.

The plenary session featured four presentations by eminent economists: ‘Are We Heading for Another Debt Crisis in Low-Income Countries? Debt Vulnerabilities: Today vs. the pre-HIPC Era’ by Dr. Chuku Chuku, Economist, International Monetary Fund, Washington D.C; ‘The Political Economy of Economic Policy Advice’ by Prof. Stefan Dercon, Director, Centre for the Study of African Economies and Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford; ‘Debt Distress and Fiscal Space for Climate-Resilient Development in Sub-Saharan Africa’ by Prof. Kevin Gallagher, Director, Global Policy Centre, Boston University; and ‘African Sovereign Debt: An Overview of the Challenges and Opportunities’ by Prof. Daniel Bradlow, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Advancement of Scholarship (CAS), University of Pretoria.

Other distinguished panellists on the policy roundtable were: Dr. Hippolyte Fofack, Chief Economist and Director of Research, The Africa Export-Import Bank (Afrexim Bank); Prof. Pramila Krishnan, University of Oxford and Fellow, Pembroke College, UK; Dr. Selma Karuaihe, Head and Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development, University of Pretoria, South Africa; Dr. Paul Mpuga, Country Chief Economist, African Development Bank Group; Prof. Amanda Guimbeau, Département d’économique, Université de Sherbrooke, Canada; and Dr. Hany Abdel-Latif, Economist, International Monetary Fund, Washington D.C.



Dr. Selma Karuihe



Prof. Amanda Gambeau



60%

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Knowledge Sharing on Growing Multiple Crises in Low-income Economies

THE ODI organised a policy engagement workshop for the IDRC-funded researchers working on the impact of war in Ukraine Phase I or Phase II projects implemented through a partnership between the AERC, the Economic Research Forum (ERF), and Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP). The meeting held on July 12, 2023, examined the main messages and discussed how to reach target audiences, including organising media training and a policy briefing.

IDRC has so far sponsored six studies (two modelling studies) and four country studies to examine the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on African countries under Phase I of the project. The studies include:

- *Exploring the Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Low-Income Economies using the GVAR approach* by Samson M’buoke, Abebe Shimeles, Daniel Guarara and Dianah Ngui.
- *The Impact of the War in Ukraine on Africa: A Global-CGE Analysis* by Caesar Cororaton, Heinrich Bohlmann and Jessika Bohlmann.
- *Food security effects of food and agricultural inputs trade shocks from the Russia-Ukraine region in South Africa and Mozambique: Exploring the roles of the Maputo corridor, SADC, and continental sources* by Nicholas Ngepah
- *Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis on Food Security in Kenya and Ethiopia: Options for Regional Trade Collaboration* by Alemayu Geda and Phillip Musyoka.
- *Recherche collaborative sur l’impact de la guerre en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire et les défis de développement: Cas du développement des échanges agricoles entre le Maroc et le Sénégal* (Collaborative research on the impact of the war in Ukraine on food security and development challenges: A case study on the development of agricultural exchanges between Morocco and Senegal) by Mohammed Benayad.
- *The impacts of the war in Ukraine: Food security and compounding development challenges - Egypt-Sudan corridor: How the two countries are affected and what are the prospects for building resilience* by Chahir Zaki, Alzaki Alhelo, and Kabbashi Suliman.



AERC Hosts Gender and Nutrition Mainstreaming, and Demand Analysis Workshop in South Africa

The African Economic Research Consortium recently hosted a five-day Gender and Nutrition Mainstreaming, and Demand Analysis workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event, which took place on October 2, 2023, was officially presided over by Prof. Dominique Njinkeu, AERC Interim Executive Director.

The objective of the workshop was to equip the researchers with principles of engendering their research and to equip them with nutrition metrics, and tools for demand and policy simulation analysis under the Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets (PASHFARM) project. The workshop was attended by 28 researchers from 12 sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries representing 20 research teams under this project.

The workshop facilitators included Dr. Lanoi Maloiy, the PASHFARM Gender Expert; Dr. Maureen Cheserek, the PASHFARM Nutrition Expert; Prof. Elaine Unterhalter, the Nordic Consulting Group; and Prof. Ellen McCullough, University of Georgia.



PASHFARM Researchers and AERC Staff in a Group Photo at the Protea Marriott Wanderers Hotel, Johannesburg

Using the Turner et al (2018) food environment framework, the project endeavours to rigorously research on retail markets for nutritious foods for informed policymaking, programme design, and healthy nutrition outcomes in SSA. One of the key questions is how to incentivise retail markets to offer accessible and affordable nutritious foods to low-income consumers, thus increasing consumption.



Dr. Lanoi Maloiy, the PASHFARM Gender Expert at the Protea Marriott Wanderers Hotel, Johannesburg.



Skit by participants in the gender mainstreaming training.

Launch of the Hybrid CMAAE Shared Facility for Specialisation and Electives (SFSE)

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) launched the hybrid version of the Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) and Shared Facility for Specialisation and Electives (SFSE) at the University of Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. The event was officiated by Prof. Dominique Njinkeu, the AERC Interim Executive Director. It took place on October 2, 2023.

The hybrid phase, combining online and face-to-face delivery modalities, began on October 2 and will end on November 30, 2023, with the physical component that brings together 65 CMAAE students and nine lecturers being hosted by the University of Pretoria, while all other students in the seven network universities – Haramaya (Ethiopia), Makerere (Uganda), Egerton and Nairobi (Kenya), Sokoine (Tanzania), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR-Malawi), and Zimbabwe, participate online from their

home countries. This follows the fully online phase for all students which ran from August 1 to September 27, 2023.

The speakers from the University

The launch, which was conducted online and physically at the University of Pretoria, was attended by 14 visiting and resident lecturers and 131 students from the CMAAE network universities representing 17 African nationalities.

of Pretoria were Prof. Vinesh Maharaj, the Deputy Dean, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences; Prof. Edilegnaw Wale Zegeye, the Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development; and Dr. Selma Karuaihe, the 2023 CMAAE SFSE Coordinator at UP.

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Participants at the launch of the Shared Facility for Specialisation and Electives (SFSE).

Centre for Effective Global Action

11th African Evidence Summit

A ERC participated in the Centre for Effective Global Action (CEGA) 11th African Evidence Summit from June 19-20, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. The theme of the session was **‘Growth, poverty, inequality and redistribution relationships’**. AERC organised two policy panel sessions during the summit, during which two country case study papers funded by NORAD, through the ‘Re-examining the Growth, Poverty, Inequality, and Redistribution relationships in Africa (GPIR project)’ collaborative research, were presented.

- Asymmetric response of poverty to growth and inequality in South Africa: implication for current and future shocks by Nicholas Ngepah, Professor of Economics, University of Johannesburg.
- Examining poverty dynamics in Ghana: Evidence from longitudinal and repeated cross-sectional data by Dr. Dede Gafa, Fellow, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and Louis Hodey, Research Officer, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.



Impact of war in Ukraine final review virtual workshop

Through generous support by IDRC, AERC, ERF, and PEP formed a partnership to undertake an in-depth study through collaborative research of the impacts using a three-pronged approach. The major objective of the collaborative research effort is to examine the macroeconomic channels, impacts, and potential responses to the RUW shock both in the short to medium run and in the long run under alternative scenarios of the shock's size and duration. The final review workshop for Phase I took place virtually on 27 June 2023. The objective of the workshop was to provide a platform for discussing the final output derived from the post-preliminary findings of the three components of the project among authors and research experts in the field. The final review workshop will be followed by dissemination and policy engagement activities. To facilitate the engagement activities, a policy/review engagement workshop was held on 12 July to work on a joint briefing. This will be followed by a targeted media training workshop, and also a meeting during IMF/WB meetings.

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The major objective of the collaborative research effort is to examine the macroeconomic channels, impacts, and potential responses to the RUW shock in the short to medium run and in the long run under alternative scenarios of the shock's size and duration.

IN – COUNTRY DISSEMINATION WORKSHOPS



1 The Gambia : Health, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Africa

The National Farmers Platform (NFPG) in collaboration with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted a national dissemination workshop on May 12, 2014, at Paradise Suites Hotel themed: “Health, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Africa”.

The workshop which was chaired by Hon. Sheriffo Bojang, President of the National Farmers Platform, provided a platform for the dissemination, analysis and discussion of the research findings from the project inclusive finance in fragile and post-conflict states funded by the IDRC.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Sheriffo Bojang noted that the dissemination workshop was an opportunity for the stakeholders in the economic sector to adequately digest the research outcome and be able to relate it to financial realities to ensure effective financial inclusion across all sectors. He added that the National Farmers has conducted research on market access to smallholder businesses which was similar to the research outcomes of the project being

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L-R: Isatou Badjie, Laston Manja, Muhammed Sonko, CBG, and Omar Kanteh, Ministry of Trade.

The Gambia : Health, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Africa



Participants at the workshop.

presented at the workshop. Lamin Fadera, Secretary-General of the platform, highlighted the importance of inclusive access to finance, particularly for farmers. He said it is crucial for the country's economic development, food security and climate change mitigation efforts.

Dr. Dianah Muchai (AERC) noted that the goals of the project were to understand financial sector development and inclusion in fragile and post-conflict countries in Africa observing that Africa's inclusive growth and realisation of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depended on inclusive finance in the first stage. She further noted that the lack of access to financial services stifles entrepreneurial activities and may deepen poverty leading to underdevelopment and stagnation, thereby exacerbating social and economic tensions. Hence, the dissemination event would not only enable us to understand the role of financial inclusion in achieving the UN SDGs in fragile and post-conflict situations but also inform policy on Africa's inclusive growth and realisation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (SDGs).

During the workshop, Isatou Bagie and Laston Manja presented research findings from the project titled, 'The Impacts of Access to Finance on Household Welfare in the Gambia'. They indicated that poor access to finance remains one of the key challenges faced by households and businesses in The Gambia, in the face of an underdeveloped financial market. The discussions on access to finance and economic inclusion strategies in The Gambia were led by Mr. Omar Kanteh, Principal Planner Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Mr. Muhammed Sonko who represented the Director of Micro-Finance of the Central Bank of Gambia.

Dr. Dianah Muchai (AERC) noted that the goals of the project were to understand financial sector development and inclusion in fragile and post-conflict countries in Africa observing that Africa's inclusive growth and realisation of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depended on inclusive finance in the first stage.

2 Nigeria: Human Capital Development in Africa

On July 18, 2023, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), in collaboration with the AERC, held a webinar and dissemination workshop with the theme “Human Capital Development in Africa: Country Case Study – Nigeria.”

In his welcome remarks, Chief Economist and Director of Research at the NESG, Dr. Olusegun Omisakin, said that the workshop would look at different areas of human capital development and how that can inform different policy recommendations at various levels of government, spanning the national, state and local governments. He stated that human capital development is not just a development indicator but the main indicator, noting that Nigeria has experienced high and low growth, including recessions, an indication of the capacity of its products and the need for improved human capital development indicators in terms of health, employment opportunities and skills.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Tom Kimani, Lead Manager, Training, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), stated that the AERC is focused on capacity-building for economic policy in Africa and that the dissemination workshop focuses more on policy outreach. He noted that the

AERC research programme has a thematic and collaborative programme, with the former focused on capacity building for young and early-career researchers. The thematic research

In his welcome remarks, Chief Economist and Director of Research at the NESG, Dr. Olusegun Omisakin, said that the workshop would look at different areas of human capital development and also how that can inform different policy recommendations at various levels of government, spanning the national, state and local governments.

has five themes, poverty, labour market and income distribution; macroeconomic policy and growth; finance and resource mobilisation; production, trade and economic integration; and agriculture, climate change and natural resource management.

While presenting a paper on “Foreign direct investments and human capital development in Nigeria: A firm-level Analysis of Manufacturing and ICT,” an economist at the NESG, Mr. Sodik Olofin, said that in Nigeria, recent FDI inflows are becoming more sensitive to the characteristics of the country’s labour force. He noted that in the past years, FDI inflows usually focused on the oil-sector - resource-seeking activities, which have resulted in little or zero gains for the country regarding employment creation, capacity building for the existing workforce, and insignificant human capital gains. Mr. Olofin reiterated that the direction of the new FDI inflows into Nigeria



Nigeria: Human Capital Development in Africa

has resulted in divergent labour market outcomes, noting that these investments favoured technology-enabling sectors such as ICT, education, health, and manufacturing, which have high propensities for knowledge transfers, boosting employment and employability.

When presenting the second paper on “Analysing the Determinants of Healthcare Insurance Uptake in Nigeria,” Mr. Wasiu Adekunle, an Economist with the NESG, stated that health insurance coverage in Nigeria has historically been low. Less than 5% of Nigeria’s over 200 million people are covered by health insurance, suggesting low uptake of healthcare insurance, as financing healthcare through private and public health insurance schemes accounts for about 1.9% of the total current health spending in the country. He noted that despite the introduction of the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) Act in 2021, which makes health insurance mandatory for all citizens, the use of compulsion alone to increase the uptake of healthcare insurance might not guarantee the expected outcome.

Prof Yelwa Mohammed of the Department of Economics, University of Abuja, while presenting the paper on “Child development and family human capital investment decisions in Nigeria: a study of selected states in the six geo-political zones”, said that Nigeria’s economic growth and productivity depend on the development of human capital. He noted that the country’s human capital development still needs to improve, particularly among low-income rural families who lack the means to invest in their children’s futures. He stated that the lack of resource endowment in most households and cultural prejudices against girls are two main factors contributing to inadequate human capital development in Nigeria and that family size and per capita income also influence decisions about investing in human capital.

In her presentation on “The differential impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on education in Nigeria: implications for policy review,” Dr. Kehinde Oluwaseun Omotoso of the National Centre for Technology Management (NACETEM), Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, stated that before the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria’s education sector was considered fragile and fraught with unequal access to schooling and learning experiences. She noted that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown only exacerbated the problems of high rates of school absenteeism, dropout, and out-of-school children, which were relatively high before the pandemic.

<5%

Less than 5% of Nigeria’s over 200 million people are covered by health insurance, suggesting low uptake of healthcare insurance, as financing healthcare through private and public health insurance schemes accounts for about 1.9% of the total current health spending in the country.



Mr. Musiliu Adewole of the Department of Economics, School of Management Technology, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State, while presenting a paper on “Determinants of participation in large-scale school programmes in Nigeria”, said that North-South disparities in school participation persist in Nigeria despite implementing two large-scale school expansion programmes. He revealed that areas with complex pre-colonial government structures seemingly record higher school enrolment in Nigeria, while those with heavy investment in Koranic education report otherwise. He, however, also noted that areas with more complex pre-colonial government structures report poorer school enrolment when they have invested more in Koranic education, indicating evidence of a mismatch between modern economic demands and skills possessed by learners in Nigeria.

Human Capital Development in Africa: Country Case Studies – Nigeria (In-Country Dissemination Workshop)

- NESG, AERC hold In-country Workshop on Africa’s Human Capital Development <https://promptnewsonline.com/nesc-aerc-hold-in-country-workshop-on-africas-human-capital-development/>
- NESG, AERC hold webinar on human capital development in Africa <https://tribuneonline.ng/nesc-aerc-hold-webinar-on-human-capital-development-in-africa/>
- <https://dailytrust.com/experts-canvass-human-capital-devt-to-drive-economic-growth/>
- NESG, AERC Advocate Improved Human Capital Development Indicators in Health, Employment <https://independent.ng/nesc-aerc-advocate-improved-human-capital-development-indicators-in-health-employment/>
- Daily Trust Newspaper, Friday July 21, 2023 Page 20
- The Nation Newspaper, Friday July 21, 2023 Page 30

3 Nigeria: The Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Relationships in Africa (GPIR) collaborative research project

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), in collaboration with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), on Tuesday, 25th July 2023, held an In-Country Dissemination Workshop with the theme, “**The Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Relationships in Africa (GPIR) collaborative research project.**”

The Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Relationships in Africa (GPIR) collaborative research project funded by NORAD is a sequel to one of the most successful collaborative projects of AERC undertaken in the late 1990s and early 2000, namely “Poverty, Income Distribution, and Labour Market Issues in Africa”. This project influenced the design of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers adopted across Africa.

In his welcome remarks, Chief Economist and director of research at the NESG, Dr Olusegun Omisakin, who was represented by Dr Seyi Vincent, an economist at the NESG, said that it has become more critical to generate policy recommendations for ensuring better living standards for the average Nigerian. She noted that poverty has risen despite an increase in Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) when GDP growth should help tackle poverty. “Multidimensional poverty rose from 43.7 in 2019 to 63.2 per cent in 2021.

The workshop will focus on the effects of human capital development on multidimensional

The Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Relationships in Africa (GPIR) collaborative research project funded by NORAD is a sequel to one of the most successful collaborative projects of AERC undertaken in the late 1990s and early 2000, namely “Poverty, Income Distribution, and Labour Market Issues in Africa”.



poverty and household improvement and, at the macroeconomic level, analyse why human capital development is key for economic competitiveness, improved living standards and economic growth that strengthens socio-economic development in Nigeria,” she stated.

In her opening remarks, the manager of thematic research at the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Dr Scholastica Odhiambo, stated that the AERC has a capacity-building framework for thematic and collaborative research on contemporary topical issues in Africa. She reiterated that the workshop is based on existing studies and provides a platform for sharing evidence and encouraging policy dialogue on poverty, income distribution and growth issues. She further stated that discussions will contribute to pathways for policy action, alleviation of poverty and inequality and address continuous and emerging challenges on topical economic issues.

Dissemination Workshops

Nigeria: The Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Relationships in Africa (GPIR) collaborative research project

While presenting a research paper on “Impact of Human Capital Endowment on Household Welfare in Nigeria,” Mr Henry C. Edeh of the Department of Economics, University of Nigeria, stated that the growth elasticity of poverty in Nigeria is relatively low and for every 1.0 per cent increase in growth, poverty reduction is 0.6 per cent which can be attributed to differences in welfare levels in urban and rural areas and across geo-political levels. He further revealed that according to the World Bank and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the poverty rate at the national level increased from 35% in 2010 to 41% in 2019, noting that the rate of inequality is also rising and that the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRI) report shows that Nigeria remains at the bottom of the CRI index.

Furthermore, Mr. Edeh highlighted that the study revealed a significant enhancement in household income with each additional year of schooling. Critical policy recommendations encompass targeted social programs, such as scholarships and improved access to health services through health insurance, aiming to uplift impoverished households. Additionally, increasing employment opportunities by providing affordable energy sources and basic infrastructure can notably enhance the well-being and quality of life for impoverished households in both rural and urban areas.

During the panel session, Prof Akin Osigbogun - Consultant, Public Health Physician and Member of the Health Policy Commission, NESG, said Nigeria is not using its human capital resources well. He noted that countries with the worst health outcomes have increased out-of-pocket spending. “As much as 70% of total health expenditure is from private and out-of-pocket spending, which needs to be changed. If 50 million Nigerians can pay 1,000 naira a month, we will have 50 billion and for 12 months that is 600 billion which is lesser than what people spend on phone calls and larger than the national budget on health at the moment,” he stated.

Prof. Osigbogun further stated that it was critical for Nigeria to adopt a subsidiary



principle where such funds are locally managed, and the government can retain a percentage of the public good that is totally financed in the interest of the public, noting that countries with social advancement programmes already have social structures on the ground.

The MD/CEO of Clina-Lancet Laboratories and Member of the Health Policy Commission, NESG, Dr. Dawodu Olayemi, said that the research backs a lot of assumptions in terms of the distribution of education, health and infrastructure from rural to urban areas and across geo-political zones. Urban dwellers have access to better healthcare, better personnel and funding than those in rural areas, noting the importance of educating the public to invest in health to reduce poverty and close the inequality gap.

Faculty member of the Non-residential Fellowship Programme, NESG, Prof. Risikat Dauda, said that Nigeria needs economic

growth that will lead to an appreciable decrease in poverty, bring about employment opportunities, reduce inequalities and ensure the poor and vulnerable groups have access to education. She reiterated the importance of having policy prescriptions that address the poor and vulnerable groups, as they are mainly in the informal sector, while also noting the need for the government to create an enabling environment that encourages all Nigerians to thrive through the provision of adequate and constant power supply, access to good infrastructure and access to funds and loans.

The Executive Director of the Policy Innovation Centre of the NESG, Dr Osasuyi Dirisu, said that disparities in the country must be viewed from the supply and demand sides by identifying the sociocultural contexts that create disparities in the health sector, such as access to education and social norms that drive early child marriage, transactional opportunities and objectification of young girls. She noted that investments must consider the gender gap and be responsive to gender and regional disparities by carrying communities along and government providing focused leadership that sees development as a collective and business opportunity for growth and development in the country.

70%

As much as 70% of total health expenditure is from private and out-of-pocket spending, which needs to be changed.

4 Uganda: Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor in the East African Community (DFSP-EAC)



Participants take a group photo after the workshop in Kampala.

The Economic Policy Research Centre, in partnership with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), on August 17, 2023, hosted a half-day dissemination workshop at Sheraton Kampala Hotel for studies on digital financial services and financial inclusion in Uganda.

The workshop was held under the theme, “*Actionable Policies for Financial Inclusion*”, and featured participants in the fintech business, banking and non-banking sectors and industry regulators, business associations, and telecommunication companies among others.

The AERC commissioned the studies presented under the Bill and Melinda (BMGF) funded project ‘*Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor in the East African Community (DFSP-EAC)*’ implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi.

Dr. Sarah Ssewanyana, the EPRC Executive Director, in remarks read on her behalf by EPRC Director of Research, Dr. Ibrahim Kasirye, said the studies were particularly significant as they touched

areas that need attention from policymakers. She said: “The majority of women excluded from the formal financial system around the globe, about one billion in total, are found in developing countries such as Uganda. At times, something

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Dissemination Workshops

Uganda: Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor in the East African Community (DFSP-EAC)

as simple as [not having] a national identity card (ID) has proved to be a significant barrier to accessing formal financial services for women.” She added that digital financial services have so much promise to bridge the financial inclusion gap, although women and some men, especially in rural areas, still find themselves on the wrong side of the coin. She said barriers such as internet cost, the high likelihood of not owning a basic mobile phone for women, social norms such as ‘a woman is not supposed to own a phone,’ or the need to seek permission from the husband to open a bank account, have proved insurmountable.

Dr. Tom Kimani, the Lead Manager, Training, at the African Economic Research Consortium, said the studies would add to the body of knowledge in understanding the digital financial services in Uganda; and identify policy gaps and areas of opportunities as well as discuss strategies to address challenges hindering the DFSs.

Rhyming with previous research, the studies clearly show men were advantaged over women and, hence, more likely to be financially included. Social norms still occupy the everyday life of many rural households and hinder women’s uptake of some digital technologies. Also, women are hindered by the cost of internet, lack of network in rural areas, and lack of basic equipment such as mobile phones.

Dr. Michael Atingi-Ego, the Deputy Governor Bank of Uganda (BOU), noted that technological innovations have come with innovative products and services such as digital credit, savings, investment partnerships, micro-insurance, and efficient payment platforms. These have proved handy in cost-cutting and bridging financial exclusion gaps.

Dr. Tom Kimani, the Lead Manager, Training, at the African Economic Research Consortium, said the studies would add to the body of knowledge in understanding the digital financial services in Uganda; and identify policy gaps and areas of opportunities as well as discuss strategies to address challenges hindering the DFSs.



A section of participants pay keen attention during the presentations.

Studies presented at the workshop are:

Digital finance policy and its impact on financial inclusion in Uganda by Nicholas Okot and Elizabeth Kasekende.

Gender digital financing divide in Uganda: a quantitative analysis of social-economic factors by Ambrose Ogwang, Rehema Kahunde, Maya Denis Makika.

The monetary economics of e-money and policy implications: evidence from Uganda by Nicholas Okot, Isaac M.B. Shinyekwa, Enoch N.W. Bulime and Justine Luwedde.

Leveraging digital services and market development for financial inclusion by Isaac M. B. Shinyekwa, Dablin Mpuuga, Aida K. Nattabi and Enoch, N.W. Bulime.

He added in a speech read on his behalf by the BOU Director of Finance, Mr. Richard Byarugaba, that some players tend to be short-sighted to focus on profit maximisation only. This makes the products unaffordable and out of reach of many who would otherwise benefit from them.

5 Tanzania: Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor

The Science Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organisation (STIPRO) in collaboration with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted a dissemination workshop themed “Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor.”

This collaborative event was aimed at disseminating the latest research findings on digital financial inclusion services for the poor specifically for Tanzania. These findings are a result of a collaborative project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on Financial Inclusion and Market Development in East African community economies, involving six East African countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan. The opening session of the event was led by Dr. Bitrina Diyamett, Executive Director of STIPRO and Dr. Dianah Muchai from the AERC, and graced by a speech from Dr. Jaha Mvulla, Director of Research, Innovation and Training at Tanzanian e-Government Agency (eGA).

The workshop provided a platform to present and stir discussion from the



Participants during the dissemination workshop.



Participants engage panellists during a Q and A session at the workshop.

findings of three research projects titled “Taxation on mobile money transfers: Who hurts more? Individuals or businesses?” by Karia Sekumbo, Noella Ringo and Constantine Manda; “Digital innovation ecosystem development for financial inclusion and market access:

A case of Tanzania” by Dennis Mwighusa and Bitrina Diyamett;

Dr. Jaha Mvulla from the Tanzanian e-Government Agency emphasised the importance of engaging specific government agencies responsible and highlighted the agency’s readiness to collaborate in all initiatives related to ICT and the digital economy.

and “Digital financial services through mobile phones: Status and challenges faced by rural women” by Lanta Daniel. The presentations all gained from vigorous and engaging discussions on issues raised and propositions for the way forward.

In their opening remarks, Dr. Jaha Mvulla from the Tanzanian e-Government Agency emphasised the importance of engaging specific government agencies responsible and highlighted the agency’s readiness to collaborate in all initiatives related to ICT and the digital economy. While Dr. Bitrina Diyamett stressed the importance of striking a balance whereby taxation that allows the government to collect its revenue is set in such a way that it does not bring exclusion in usage of the digital financial services, Dr. Dianah Muchai emphasised having policy recommendations that are practical and beneficial to the society.

This event brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including researchers, financial service providers, technology experts, representatives from civil society organisations and most of all public sector and government agencies including the responsible ministries.

6 Burkina Faso: Climate Change and Economic Development

The Centre d’Etudes, de Documentation et de Recherche Economiques et Sociales (CEDRES) of Thomas Sankara University (UTS) and the Consortium for Economic Research in Africa (CREA) based in Kenya, organised a workshop to disseminate the results of research on climate change on July 25, 2023, in Ouagadougou. The representative of the Executive Director of AERC, Mr. John Muriithi Gitari, was present at the workshop.

The opening session was chaired by Prof. Youmanli Ouoba, Director of CEDRES, in the presence of the university community and representatives of public and private structures. In his welcoming remarks, Prof. Ouoba thanked all the participants who mobilised to take part in this face-to-face and remote dissemination workshop. He particularly thanked AERC, which had funded the research whose results were the subject of the workshop. For him, “the workshop that brings us together today aims to share with you [the participants] the results of research on human capital, which is the most powerful weapon to change the world above all, we hope that these results will be useful to decision-makers and all users of these products.”

The presentations were moderated by

The opening session was chaired by Prof. Youmanli Ouoba, Director of CEDRES, in the presence of the university community and representatives of public and private structures.



Workshop participants pose for a photo.

Prof. Achille Diendere, Director of the University Institute of Initial and Continuing Training (IUFIC) of Thomas Sankara University, and provided by the teacher-researchers Porto Bazie, Alain Siri and Aïcha Tiendrebeogo. The teacher-researchers, Porto Bazie and Alain SIRI, addressed in their article, “Foreign direct investment [FDI] and human capital development in Burkina Faso”. Alain

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Dissemination Workshops

Burkina Faso: Climate Change and Economic Development

>>> SIRI and Omer COMBARY focused on the theme “Human capital, household prosperity and social inequalities in Burkina Faso”, and Lamissa BARRO, Aïcha Tiendrebeogo, Issa NANA and Landry KY to focus on “Level of education, economic empowerment of mothers and infant mortality in Burkina Faso” in their paper.

Dr. BAZIE qui, a avancé dans leurs travaux que, « longtemps laissé presque à la charge de l’Etat, les principaux obstacles liés à l’accès à l’éducation au Burkina Faso restent les contraintes financières », estime que l’étude « permettra aux décideurs de mieux comprendre que le canal de mobilisation fiscale est la solution par laquelle les IDE affectent le développement du capital au Burkina Faso parmi tant d’autres canaux, et recommande [l’étude] que le Burkina Faso continue à améliorer son système fiscal et à développer des politiques plus favorables pour attirer les IDE afin d’améliorer davantage le développement du capital humain ». (Dr. Bazie, who progressed in their work, stated that, “for a long time, the main obstacles related to access to education in Burkina Faso have largely been left to the State’s responsibility,” and believes that the study “will enable decision-makers to better understand that the fiscal mobilization channel is the solution through

which Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) impact the development of capital in Burkina Faso among many other channels.” The study recommends that Burkina Faso continues to enhance its tax system and develop more favorable policies to attract FDIs in order to further improve human capital development).

Alain Siri a, dans son exposé laissé entendre qu’afin de libérer tous les effets de l’accumulation du capital humain sur la prospérité des travailleurs, les autorités doivent engager les réformes « – Pour l’éducation et la formation, adapter les curricula enseignés, accroître l’offre d’enseignement et de formation techniques et professionnelles ; – En faveur de la promotion de l’emploi décent, poursuivre l’amélioration des politiques du marché du travail, faciliter l’accès aux stages et aux formations de courtes durées pour les jeunes et les travailleurs déflatés et accompagner l’entrepreneuriat des jeunes ; – Enfin, concernant la politique de nutrition, la réarmer pour couvrir l’alimentation au travail ». Car « l’étude a montré qu’en cas de baisse de rendements des dotations du capital humain en ses dimensions, éducation, santé, nutrition et emploi décent, l’amélioration attendue des revenus peut ne pas s’observer » a dit M. Siri. (Alain Siri, during his presentation, suggested that in order

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Burkina Faso: Climate Change and Economic Development

>>> *to unleash all the effects of the accumulation of human capital on workers' prosperity, authorities must initiate reforms such as: "For education and training, adapt the taught curricula, increase the offering of technical and professional education and training;*

In favor of promoting decent employment, continue improving labor market policies, facilitate access to internships and short-term training for young people and displaced workers, and support young entrepreneurs;

Lastly, concerning nutrition policy, reinforce it to cover workplace nutrition."

He stated, "the study has shown that in the event of reduced yields in human capital endowments in its dimensions—education, health, nutrition, and decent employment—the expected improvement in income may not be observed."

The analysis of the study by Barro, Tiendrebeogo, Nana and KY, presented by Dr. Aïcha Tiendrebeogo "reveals that in Burkina Faso, the improvement of women's human capital is favourable to their economic empowerment", hence the study therefore recommends "the continuity of policies in favour of the education of girls and women with a view to improving their economic empowerment by allowing them to have access to income-generating activities".

As a reminder, CEDRES is a UTS research centre that has been in existence since 1977 with the mission of supporting the socio-economic development of Burkina Faso and Africa at large through research and training in economic, social and management sciences. Since 2021, it has been structured around five research teams, including four in economics and one in management. As for the

The analysis of the study by Barro, Tiendrebeogo, Nana and KY, presented by Dr. Aïcha Tiendrebeogo "reveals that in Burkina Faso, the improvement of women's human capital is favourable to their economic empowerment", hence the study therefore recommends "the continuity of policies in favour of the education of girls and women with a view to improving their economic empowerment by allowing them to have access to income-generating activities".



AERC, it is a capacity building institution aimed at informing the economic policy mechanism in sub-Saharan Africa and includes three main components including research, training and policy advocacy.

Social Media Links:

Press Release: CEDRES-AERC: Climate change research results presented at a workshop – Thomas Sankara University (uts.bf)

Media articles:

Développement du capital humain : tenue d'un atelier pour disséminer des résultats de recherche – Les Editions Faso Actu (faso-actu.info)

Burkina: CEDRES shares the results of its research on human capital - Minute.bf

CEDRES-AERC: Climate change research results presented at a workshop – Thomas Sankara University (uts.bf)

Burkina/Autonomisation des femmes : Leur capital humain amélioré, selon les résultats de recherches du CEDRES - leFaso.net

Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/aercafrica>

7 Central African Republic: Inclusive Finance for Fragile and Post-Conflict States

AERC implemented a Collaborative Project with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) on Inclusive Finance for Fragile and Post-Conflict States, dedicated to post-conflict countries. This programme focused on the issue of financial inclusion in Africa, targeting nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

AERC in collaboration with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Analyses et Politiques Economiques (CERAPE) organised a dissemination workshop with a view to informing policy on Africa's inclusive growth and realisation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (SDGs). The hybrid meeting took place on April 14, 2023, at the Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale (CNSS) in Bangui, Central African Republic, to disseminate the research findings of the research report entitled "Determinants of Financial Exclusion in CAR" that was presented by Dr. Mballa Nerry, Deputy National Coordinator of CERAPE-CAR. To open the meeting was Mr. Jean Kokide, Dr. Jean-KOKIDE, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technological Innovation who delivered the keynote speech and highlighted the importance of AERC in capacity building and institutional support in sub-Saharan Africa. The



AERC was represented by Dr. Mark Korir, Training Manager, who gave a brief on AERC. While in Bangui, the AERC team met with part of the CERAPE-RCA team

for an institutional evaluation and pre-workshop briefing. The AERC team later visited the CERAPE-RCA's office and handed over some AERC publications for CERAPE-RCA's library.

AERC in collaboration with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Analyses et Politiques Economiques (CERAPE) organised a dissemination workshop with a view to informing policy on Africa's inclusive growth and realisation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (SDGs).

8 Benin: Climate Change and Economic Development

On May 3, 2023, the Laboratoire d'Ecologie Appliquée (LEA) at the Université d'Abomey-Calavi convened a stakeholders' workshop to disseminate the findings from the collaborative research on "Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA)" focusing on the theme "Climate change and resilient livestock feeding practices in Benin," by Dr. Marthe.

The workshop brought together executives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, agents from the Territorial Agricultural Development Agencies (ATDA), and organisations of breeders at the national and regional levels. Two papers were presented. The first focused on "Dual purpose crop productivity and food security of small dairy farmers in the face of climate variability and change in Benin" and was presented by Dr. Marthe Montcho. The second was led by Dr Alassane Assani Séidou, with the theme "How to treat sorghum and maize straw with urea to better feed dairy cattle in the dry season".

The Director of the Laboratoire d'Ecologie Appliquée (LEA), Prof. Brice Sinsin, opened the workshop and stressed on its importance as part of a drive to adopt new resilient practices for livestock feed and food security for dairy farmers in the face of climate variability. He pointed out that "all research must benefit those for whom it is intended".



Social media Links:

Journal Media Education: <https://media.eduactions.bj/resilience-face-aux-changements-climatiques-de-nouvelles-pistes-pour-l'alimentation-du-betail/>

Journal La Nation: <https://lanation.bj/client/newscasts/changement-climatique-des-pratiques-resilientes-d'alimentation-du-betail-au-benin>

Journal Evenement Précis: <https://levenementprecis.com/2023/05/11/pratiques-d'alimentation-des-betails-face-au-changement-climatique-le-laboratoire-lea-uac-expose-ses-resultats-de-recherche/>

ORTB : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8nJbbupfmg>

9 Senegal: Human Capital Development in Africa

As part of the activities to disseminate the results of their research on “Human Capital Development in Africa”, the Consortium for Economic Research in Africa (CREA) and its partner in Senegal, the Consortium for Economic and Social Research (CRES), organised a workshop on July 18, 2023, in Dakar.

This meeting was an opportunity for exchange between public administration experts, researchers and civil society actors around the work carried out in Senegal and relating to (i) The effectiveness of the universal health coverage programme (CMU); (ii) Return migration and professional integration; (iii) Participation of women in the labour market and educational progress of children; (iv) Effectiveness of vocational training alternating between the company and the training centre. These are four subjects that have been investigated by researchers from CRES, research centres in Cameroon and the economic administration of Senegal. This work is part of the research programme of the Consortium for Economic Research in Africa based in Nairobi. The Executive Director of CRES, Prof. Abdoulaye Diagne gave a simple definition of human capital: “Investments in education in general, in specific skills, and in health, or the fact that human capital is inseparable from its holder, therefore, cannot become the property of a third party. It is simply made available by the individual. It depends on the physical and mental abilities of the individual and their life cycle.”



Social Media Links

Pulse News: <https://www.pulse.sn/news/societe/insertion-professionnelle-les-migrants-de-retour-favorises/8fkmc84>

APA News: <https://fr.apanews.net/now/senegal-la-moitie-de-la-population-reste-sans-couverture-maladie-etude/>

APA News-TV: <https://fr.apanews.net/tv/senegal-le-cres-se-penche-sur-le-developpement-du-capital-humain-en-afrique/>

Intelligences Magazine: <https://intelligences.info/2023/07/19/developpement-du-capital-humain-en-afrique-des-chercheurs-revelent-letat-des-lieux-au-senegal/>

Investments in education, in general, in specific skills, and in health, or the fact that human capital is inseparable from its holder, therefore, cannot become the property of a third party. It is simply made available by the individual. It depends on the physical and mental abilities of the individual and their life cycle.”

10 Ghana: Re-examining the Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationships in Africa

AERC, with funding from NORAD, is implementing the country case studies phase of “Re-examining the Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationships in Africa (GPIR project)” that covers seven African countries: Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, Malawi, Togo, and Nigeria.

The researchers in the project have completed their papers and are expected to disseminate their findings in a national dissemination workshop. The University of Ghana - Economics Department convened the workshop on behalf of AERC on August 2, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. at the CEDI Conference Centre, University of Ghana, Accra.

The paper disseminated in Ghana was titled “Escaped or Trapped? The Untold Story of Ghana’s Poverty Reduction”. The research was

The researchers recommended the need to provide equal access to development opportunities for all because having policy options for females whilst leaving out males would, over time, create a lopsided society.



carried out by Prof. Bernardin Senadza, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Ghana; Dr. Dede Gafa, Lecturer, African School of Economics, Benin; and Mr. Louis Hodey, Researcher, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. The research sought to understand how people moved into and out of poverty based on existing datasets from 2006 to 2019, namely: Ghana Living Standard Surveys (GLSS) – 2005/06 to 2016/17 and EGC-ISSER Ghana Socioeconomic Panel Surveys – 2009/10 to 2018/19. The researchers recommended the need to provide equal access to development opportunities for all because having policy options for females whilst leaving out males would, over time, create a lopsided society.

The meeting brought together diverse partners, including policymakers, academicians, and financial institutions among other stakeholders.

Social Media Links

Ghana News - <https://gna.org.gh/2023/08/women-led-households-escaping-poverty-than-men-led-households-research/>

AERC - Science Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organisation (STIPRO) on Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), in collaboration with the Science Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organisation (STIPRO) hosted a dissemination workshop themed “Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor” on July 27, 2023, in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

The collaborative event aimed to disseminate the latest research findings on digital financial inclusion services for the poor, specifically for Tanzania. These findings resulted from a collaborative project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on Financial Inclusion and Market Development in East African community economies, involving six East African countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan.

The Opening session of the event was led by Dr. Bitrina Diyamett, Executive Director of STIPRO and Dr. Dianah Muchai from the AERC. Speaking during the event, Dr. Jaha Mvulla, Director of Research, Innovation and Training at Tanzanian e-Government Agency (eGA) emphasized the importance of engaging specific government agencies responsible and highlighted the agency’s readiness to collaborate in all initiatives related to ICT and the Digital economy.

In her remarks, Dr. Bitrina Diyamett stressed the importance of striking a balance whereby taxation that allows the government to collect its revenue is set in such a way that does not bring exclusion in the usage of digital financial services. On the other hand, Dr. Dianah Muchai emphasized having policy recommendations that are practical and beneficial to society.

The workshop provided a platform to present and stir discussion from the findings of three research projects titled “Taxation on mobile money transfers: Who hurts more? Individuals or businesses?” by Karia Sekumbo, Noella Ringo and Constantine Manda; “Digital innovation ecosystem development for financial inclusion and market access: A case of Tanzania” by Dennis Mwigusa



Participants during the digital financial services dissemination workshop.

and Bitrina Diyamett; and “Digital financial services through mobile phones: Status and challenges faced by rural women” by Lanta Daniel. The presentations gained from a vigorous and engaging discussion on issues raised and propositions of way forward.

This event brought together diverse stakeholders, including researchers, financial service providers, technology experts, representatives from civil society organisations and most public sector and government agencies, including the responsible ministries.

In her remarks, Dr. Bitrina Diyamett stressed the importance of striking a balance whereby taxation that allows the government to collect its revenue is set in such a way that does not bring exclusion in the usage of digital financial services.

Ethiopia: Implementing the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BGF) Human Capital Development (HCD) project

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in collaboration with the Ethiopian Policy Studies Institute (PSI) recently hosted an in-country research dissemination workshop to implement the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BGF) Human Capital Development (HCD) project. The event took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on July 21, 2023. This project covers seven sub-Saharan African countries namely, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, and Senegal.

The aim of the study was to generate evidence on the challenges of building human capital for accelerated inclusive development in Africa and to address key constraints on human capital accumulation such as weak public financial management and service delivery systems.

Collaborating with AERC, the PSI researchers have been participating in the human capital development project in the case of Ethiopia and recently completed their respective papers. Thus, the workshop was meant to disseminate their findings to the key stakeholders including policy makers, researchers, civil society, and the public in general. The following papers were presented:



Participant during the research dissemination workshop in Ethiopia.

- *Investment in Education and the Labour Market Mismatch in Ethiopia by Jemal Mohammed Adem (PhD) & Alebel B. Weldesilassie (PhD).*
- *The Economy-Wide Impact of Harnessing Human Capital Development by Alekaw Kebede Yeshineh (PhD) and Firew Bekele Woldeyes (PhD).*

This physical workshop, which was attended by nearly 100 participants, provided an opportunity for policymakers and researchers to engage in uninterrupted deliberations on a set of important issues regarding human capital development considered significant to policy formulation in Africa.

The aim of the study was to generate evidence on the challenges of building human capital for accelerated inclusive development in Africa and to address key constraints on human capital accumulation such as weak public financial management and service delivery systems.

AERC Session at the Third Edition of the African Conference on Debt and Development (AfCoDD III)



At the AERC session during the Third Edition of the African Conference on Debt and Development.

The AERC held a side event at the Third Edition of the African Conference on Debt and Development (AfCoDD III), which took place from August 30 to September 1, 2023, at the Radisson Blue Hotel in Dakar, Senegal.

The African Conference on Debt and Development is an annual forum that brings together political, technical, and civic leaders from Africa to deliberate and agree on commitments that safeguard the macroeconomic sustainability of the continent towards achieving the structural transformation espoused in Agenda 2063. AfCoDD III is organised by the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), AERC advocacy partner in the BMGF-funded collaborative research project on “Evidence to drive reforms for Special

Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery”. The project, coordinated by Prof. Abebe Shimeles, focuses on the in-depth analysis of specific SDR financing issues in Ghana, Ethiopia, Senegal and Kenya with the objective of producing high-quality research products and policy recommendations that are responsive to the specific needs and policy priorities of the four countries and that influence the policymaking process in those countries. During the conference, four papers from the following Think Tanks were presented:

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) - Kenya	Leveraging on Special Drawing Rights for sustaining economic recovery in Kenya
Consortium pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale (CRES) - Senegal	Special Drawing Rights reallocations and the financing of economic recovery in Senegal
The Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute (HESPI) - Ethiopia	Case studies on Evidence to drive reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery: The Case of Ethiopia
Institute of Statistical, Social & Economic Research (ISSER) - Ghana	Reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) Financing in Ghana’s Economic Recovery

High-level Seminar on Perspectives of the Global South on MDB reform

The AERC participated at a high-level seminar on perspectives of the global south on MDB reform organised by Centre for Global Development at Rabat, Morocco, on 11-12 September. Research findings from the collaborative research project on “Evidence to drive reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery” will be presented under the theme of the session “The Global Debt Dilemma: What Role for the MDBs?”

Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationships in Africa Dissemination Workshop in Ghana

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), with funding from the Norwegian Agency For Development Cooperation (NORAD) is implementing the country case studies phase of “Re-examining the Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationships in Africa (GPIR project)” that covers seven African countries: Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, Malawi, Togo, and Nigeria.

The researchers in the project have completed their papers and are now in the process of disseminating their findings in national dissemination workshops.

The Ghana paper is titled “Examining poverty dynamics in Ghana: Evidence from longitudinal and repeated cross-sectional data” by Dede W. Gafa, Bernardin Senadza, and Louis Hodey. The University of Ghana - Economics Department convened the workshop on behalf of AERC on August 2, 2023, at the CEDI Conference Center at the University of Ghana in Accra.

The researchers in the project have completed their papers and are now in the process of disseminating their findings in national dissemination workshops.

Building Policy Research Institutions to Support Human Capital

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), has implemented a collaborative research project on Human Capital Development in Africa under the “Building Policy Research Institutions to Support Human Capital” programme. The programme sought to build greater policy support for human capital at the country level, influence human capital policies, and strengthen African policy research institutions.

Under this programme, the AERC has issued visiting fellowship programme (institutional attachment) grants to researchers in this project to visit other think tanks and leading research centres around the world. The attachment period is three months and so far, AERC has already issued 14 institutional attachment grants to both think tanks and individual researchers for attachment at the following Think Tanks:

1. Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) in Uganda
2. Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) in Nigeria
3. Consortium pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale (CRES) in Senegal
4. Policy Studies Institute (PSI) in Ethiopia
5. Centre de Recherche pour le Développement (CRD) in Madagascar
6. Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) in Nigeria

We are pleased to announce the successful completion of the three-month institutional attachment for some of the project researchers. These include Prof. Yelwa Mohammed, Prof. Sarah Anyanwu; Dr. Grace Adewole; Dr. Murimi Njoka, Dr. Anthony Orji and Mafang Lionie. During their attachment, the researchers were able to benefit from and enhance interaction/networking with other researchers as well as participate in various activities including seminars and presentations at the research institutions.



Mafang Lionie at CRES.



L-R: Prof. Sarah Anyanwu and Prof. Yelwa Mohammed at NISER

During their attachment, the researchers were able to benefit from and enhance interaction/networking with other researchers as well as participate in various activities, including seminars and presentations at the research institutions.

The attaches had the following to say:

During my internship experience with NISER, I was able to publish a paper <https://twitter.com/PLOGSPH/status/1641289148844630018?t=obMjx-GEaiwqYbWgt2PdbHw&s=08> and submit a proposal for grants consideration. I found the experiences useful in improving my skill. I learned Power BI and Python with the help of a Corper at the organisation."

Dr. Grace Adewole

The various exchanges with the statisticians at the centre regarding econometric modelling in general, and specifically regarding those that consider educational data, particularly multilevel models (through sharing technical files on their implementation in Stata software), have allowed me to enhance my technical skills in terms of econometric modelling."

Mafang Lionie

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to AERC for the sponsorship, all the AERC resource persons and facilitators for their insightful comments and reviews during the Mid-review and Final Workshops in Nairobi and Senegal on our paper, and the DG of NISER, the management staff and all other reviewers in NISER who helped to improve the quality of our paper. We say a big thank you; we appreciate every single one of you whose effort and time contributed immensely to improve the quality of our work and pray that may God continue to take AERC and NISER to greater heights."

Prof. Sarah Olanrewaju Anyanwu

I want to conclude by reiterating that these three months of attachment have been a wonderful experience for me. I pray it will continue so that other scholars can also benefit from it. I am most grateful to AERC, the Management and Staff for awarding us the grant to be involved in the Human Capital Project in Africa. It was the grant that made it possible for me to visit Uganda for the first time in my life. The process would have been very difficult for us if not for the generous support and goodwill we received from you. God bless you all."

Dr. Anthony Orji

As the project researchers conclude their institutional attachments, we extend our warmest wishes for their continued success in their future endeavours. We hope that their time spent at the Think Tanks has been professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling and that the experiences gained during this period will serve as a solid foundation for their future

research endeavours. We also extend our gratitude to all the supervisors, mentors, and staff members who have supported and guided the project researchers during their attachment. Their mentorship and guidance have been instrumental to the researchers in their growth and development, and we appreciate your commitment to their success.

AERC at the 2023 Transform Africa Summit in Zimbabwe

The AERC attended the Transform Africa Summit 2023 held on April 24 to 28 at the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. The theme of the summit was ‘Connect, Innovate and Transform’. AERC is currently in the process of implementing the second phase of the Data Governance and Policy in Africa collaborative project, generously funded by the Hewlett Foundation. The summit served as a valuable platform for networking and fostering a community of practice among data governance practitioners, government officials, and private sector members.



African Data Leader Initiative Session at Transform Africa Summit 2023 organised by the Digital Impact Alliance, UNECA and Smart Africa.

Value Chain and Market Development in Africa Country Case Studies (GVC CCS Phase) Inception Workshop

AERC held the GVC Country Case Studies inception Workshop virtually on May 8-9, 2023. Eleven proposals were presented.

AERC @ ADLI Roundtable

AERC participated in the Africa Data Leadership Initiative (ADLI) Roundtable on ‘*Cyber security at the centre of digital transformation in Africa*’. The meeting was hosted virtually by Digital Impact Alliance in partnership with UNECA on May 31, 2023. AERC was represented in the roundtable by Dr. Scholastica Odhiambo, Manager of Research, AERC. The meeting is one of the activities in Data Governance and Policy Project Phase II, ‘**Political Economy and Institutional Structure of Data Policy and Governance in Africa: Linking Evidence to Policy Action in Data Governance.**’

AERC @ AUDA-NEPAD Policy Bridge Tank

AERC participated in the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for African Development (AUDA-NEPAD) Policy Bridge Think Tank Technical Advisory meeting on May 31, 2023. The meeting was hosted virtually by the AUDA-NEPAD Secretariat.

The discussion was on the members’ partnership on policy platform research. The meeting was attended by Dr. Scholastica Odhiambo, Manager of Research; Pamla Gopal, AUDA-NEPAD; Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi, African Centre for Economic Transformation

(ACET); Dr. Bitrina Diyamett, Science Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization (STIPPRO); Jakkie Cilliers, Institute for Security Studies (ISS); Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).

Thematic Groups Concurrent Sessions

Concurrent and technical sessions were held from May 23 - 29, 2023, with a total of 80 reports being presented and 81 Resource and Guest Resource persons attending. The Guest Resource includes the six theses supervisors from the CPP Universities. Of the total 80 reports, 37 were thematic new and revised research proposals, 23 interim reports, 14 final reports and six CPP PhD thesis proposals.

Thematic Group	M	F	Total	FR	WIP	RWIP	NP	RNP	CPP	Total	RPS
Group A - Poverty, labour markets and income distribution	10	12	22	2	4	0	6		3	15	20
Group B - Macroeconomic policy and growth	10	9	19	0	3	0	5	4	2	14	16
Group C - Finance and resource mobilisation	14	10	24	4	4	0	9		1	18	16
Group D - Production, trade and economic integration	14	4	18	4	4	0	6	1	0	15	12
Group E - Agriculture, climate change & natural resource management	14	7	21	4	7	1	5	1	0	18	17
	62	42	104	14	22	1	31	6	6	80	81

M-Male; F-Female; FR: Final Report; WIP Work in Progress; RWIP- Revised Work in Progress; NP -New Proposals; RNP; Revised New Proposal; CPP: Collaborative PhD Programme.

A total of 104 researchers (of whom six were CPP students), 81 thematic resource persons, four plenary presenters and four discussants, and 30 observers attended the June 2023 biannual workshop. The researchers were from 22 African countries. There were 42 women (41%) among the participating researchers. Table A1 shows thematic resource persons while Table A2 shows the distribution of researchers (including CPP students) by thematic group, nationality, and gender. As an outcome of the June 2023 Biannual Research Workshop, AERC will award both thematic and PhD research grants.

AERC Session at Centre for Global Action African Evidence Summit – CEGA in Nairobi, Kenya

The Centre for Effective Global Action (CEGA) hosted the 11th Annual Africa Evidence Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, on June 19-20, 2023. The summit is an annual opportunity for East and West African scholars, U.S.-based faculty, policymakers, and practitioners to hear about new research and forge new connections.

CEGA partnered with the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (NIERA) and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) on this event. African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in convening a policy panel and research papers at sessions at the Summit on the theme ***‘Prospecting Pro-poor Growth through Redistribution Amid Inequality in Africa’***. These session papers were generated from a collaborative project **Re-examining Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationship**

in African Economies’ funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). The purpose

These session papers were generated from a collaborative project *‘Re-examining Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationship in African Economies’* funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. (NORAD).

of the project was to: investigate drivers of growth and inequality in different African contexts; to investigate the nature of the interactions between inequality and growth and to measure the effects of the interactions on poverty reduction at micro and macro levels across African countries or regions; to investigate the dynamics of the nexus between growth-inequality-poverty, as well as the determinants of the differences in the dynamics across African countries or regions; and to build capacity to communicate research results to policymakers.

Policy Panel – Prospecting Pro-Poor Growth through Redistribution Amid Inequality in Africa



Dr. Scholastica Odhiambo



Prof. Germano Mwabu



Dr. Rose Ngugi



Ms. Lusungu Kacheche-Dzinkambani



Mr. John Olela

The panellists were: Dr. Scholastica Odhiambo, Manager of Research, AERC -Moderator; Prof. Germano Mwabu – Professor of Economics, the University of Nairobi; Dr. Rose Ngugi- Executive Director, Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA); Ms. Lusungu Kacheche -Dzinkambani - Interim Head of AU Liaison Office for OXFAM in Africa; and Mr. John Olela – Director, Sustainable Development Goals Coordination Directorate, State Department of Economic Planning, Ministry of National Treasury and Economic Planning, Republic of Kenya.

Paper Presentation Session

Prof. Nicholas Ngepah, Professor of Economics, University of Johannesburg, and Dr. Dede Gafa, Fellow, UNECA, presented two papers at the African Evidence Summit.



Prof. Nicholas Ngepah

Paper Title:

Asymmetric response of poverty to growth and inequality in South Africa: Implication for current and future shocks.

This research examines how economic growth and inequality affect poverty during times of recessions and depressions versus times of economic expansion in South Africa. The study investigates the effect of economic growth on poverty reduction given inequality at the micro-level, whether the poor suffer more losses of welfare during economic recessions and depressions than they gain during expansions, and the factors that can assist the poor to stay afloat during times of economic shocks. The study matches individuals in the NIDS dataset with municipality-level data from Quantec and uses various binary, truncated, panel, instrumental variables and quantile regression techniques in poverty and welfare models. The study finds that while economic growth reduces poverty, it is not enough to compensate for the poverty-raising effects of inequality. Moreover, economic decline raises poverty, but economic prosperity more than compensates, by attenuating poverty levels by a higher magnitude. The study also reveals that social grants and free healthcare and education policies have limited effects on poverty reduction during economic downturns. The findings call for policy measures that reduce inequality and promote economic growth to help cushion the poor during times of significant economic decline. Additionally, programmes that provide good education up to tertiary level and access to the labour market are crucial for sustaining poverty reduction efforts in South Africa.

The study finds that, while economic growth reduces poverty, it is not enough to compensate for the poverty-raising effects of inequality. Moreover, economic decline raises poverty, but economic prosperity more than compensates, by attenuating poverty levels by a higher magnitude.



Dr. Dede Gafa

Paper Title:

Examining poverty dynamics in Ghana: Evidence from longitudinal and repeated cross-sectional data (Co-authors Prof. Bernadin Senadza and Louis Hodey).

This article examines poverty dynamics in Ghana using a synthetic panel based on repeated cross-sectional data (the Ghana Living Standard Surveys (GLSS)) and actual panel data from the Ghana Socio-Economic Panel Surveys (GSPS). It provides insight into the extent of poverty mobility and persistence in Ghana, and the factors that explain poverty transitions. The results show that upward mobility has been a significant feature of poverty transitions between 2006 and 2019 in Ghana. However, there is still a high probability of poverty persistence among initially poor households and a significant likelihood of downward mobility for non-poor households. The study further identifies existing heterogeneities in poverty transitions across socio-economic characteristics and the opportunity deprivation status of the household head. The findings suggest that poverty is more chronic in rural areas and the northern parts of Ghana compared to urban and southern regions, respectively, and among households headed by persons from opportunity-deprived backgrounds. Furthermore, the gender of the household head, his/her occupation, and level of education, as well as the number of dependents in the household are important determinants of poverty persistence and downward mobility in Ghana. Hence, addressing chronic poverty in Ghana requires targeted policies that foster more inclusive and sustainable growth, especially in rural areas and northern parts of Ghana, opportunity-deprived households, the unemployed, and those in vulnerable employment.

The findings suggest that poverty is more chronic in rural areas and the northern parts of Ghana compared to urban and southern regions, respectively, and among households headed by persons from opportunity-deprived backgrounds.

Christian Mwemezi: My Experience During My CMAP at the University of Ghana 2022 and 2023

1. What is your name and what are you currently doing?

I am Christian Mwemezi Ngangura, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I am a second-year student pursuing my MPhil in Economics at the University of Ghana, supported by the AERC/CMAP programme. A dedicated academic year has been allocated for my thesis project, focusing on 'Household Electricity Consumption in Ghana.' My research interests lie in labour and environmental economics.

2. In detail, how was your CMAAE/ CPP/CMAP experience?

First, I'd like to say thank you for the opportunity extended to me, I enjoyed the programme. The CMAP is an intensive programme and I believe it is one of the best programmes that any economics scholar can desire to enroll in.

As an international student pursuing an MPhil in economics in an English-speaking country, with a French background, I have encountered a unique set of experiences and challenges compared to domestic students.

These challenges, however, I perceive as additional lectures

First, I'd like to say thank you for the opportunity extended to me, I enjoyed the programme. The CMAP is an intensive programme and I believe it is one of the best programmes that any economics scholar can desire to enroll in.



in my programme and raw material for building my career as a scholar. Studying abroad can be demanding, yet it has been an incredibly rewarding and transformative experience, contributing significantly to both my personal and academic growth. It has enabled me to cultivate a global perspective and acquire valuable skills that will undoubtedly benefit me in my future career. I appreciate the efforts of the department members and colleagues who have assisted me in navigating through these challenges.

Here are some aspects of my experiences:

Cultural Adjustment: As an international student it took me time to adapt to a new culture, language, food, and educational system, the cultural differences in teaching styles, classroom norms, and social interactions. I was initially awarded the Master's Bridge under AERC, which I pursued at the University of Lesotho. Additionally, participating in the two-week JFE in Nairobi exposed me to the English education system and helped me understand the grading system better.

In my current second year, which is dedicated to research writing, I am engaged in the process of composing a thesis. This endeavour involves conducting original research on a specific topic in economics, as mentioned in my introduction.

Visa and Immigration: Managing visa requirements, including obtaining the appropriate student visa, ensuring legal status, and staying updated on immigration regulations, was also a crucial part of my experience.

Academic Rigour: MPhil programmes in economics are academically demanding. As an international student, I needed to adapt to new teaching styles, expectations, and grading systems. During the first year, the course work in MPhil programmes in economics usually started with a series of core courses that cover various

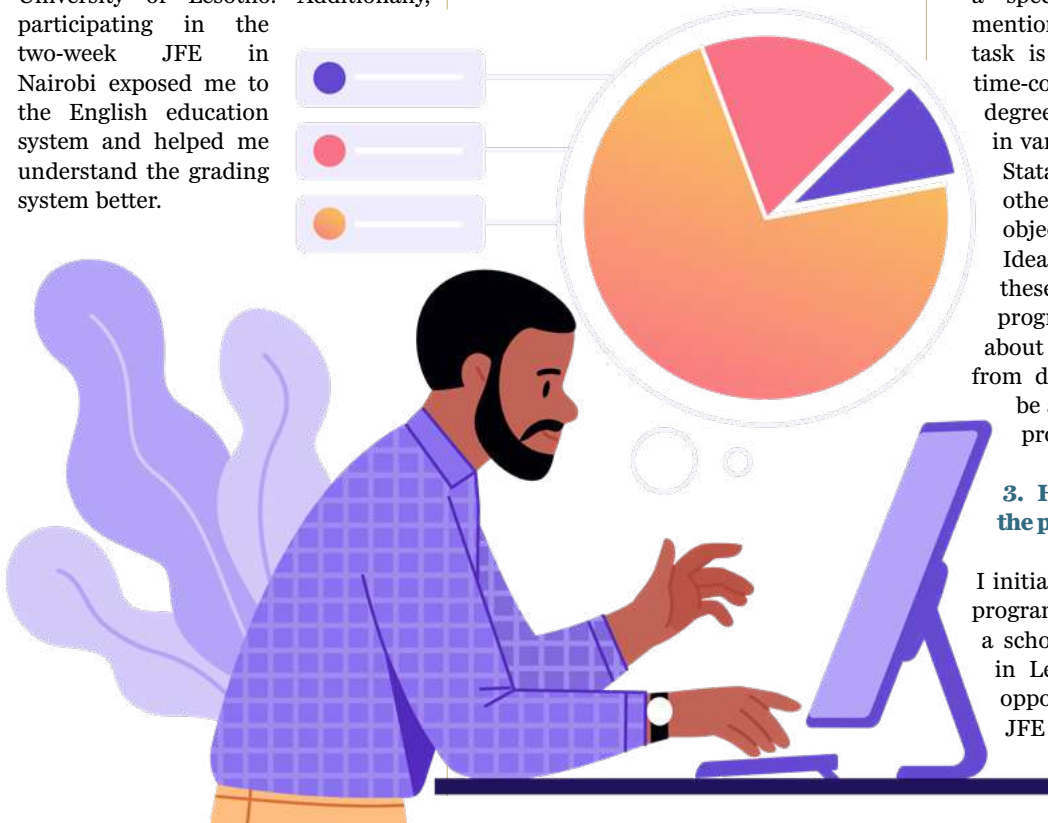
aspects of economic theory (micro and macroeconomics), econometrics, and specialised topics within economics (where I did labour economics and environment Economics). The choice of those courses was motivated by my observation of how the government in DRC in particular and Africa in general, are facing a big challenge in addressing unemployment issues while rich in terms of natural resources. Both core courses and electives require a solid background in quantitative techniques, mathematics, and statistics since students are expected to develop a strong theoretical foundation and analytical skills. This was not a bit challenging for me, since during the bridge programme I was exposed already to some of the approaches.

In my current second year, which is dedicated to research writing, I am engaged in the process of composing a thesis. This endeavour involves conducting original research on a specific topic in economics, as mentioned in my introduction. The task is intellectually challenging and time-consuming, requiring a high degree of self-discipline. Proficiency in various statistical software such as Stata, SPSS, Eviews, R, Python, and other software relevant to the study's objectives and data type is essential. Ideally, applicants should possess these skills before entering the programme. Engaging in discussions about the research topic with scholars from diverse backgrounds appears to be a pivotal element in the drafting process.

3. How did you get to be part of the programme?

I initially applied for the CMAP bridge programme in 2018 and was awarded a scholarship for a short programme in Lesotho. Additionally, I had the opportunity to participate in the JFE in Nairobi in July 2018, where I successfully passed the

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exam. During this time, I had already been admitted to the University of Mauritius. However, due to an insufficient number of students to run the CMAP programme at the University of Mauritius, the programme was not offered. Subsequently, I made a second attempt to apply, this time at the University of Ghana, Legon, in 2019, and I was admitted.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on AERC resources, as well as various travel restrictions, I made the decision to defer my admission offer to the following year. My motivation to pursue my Master's in Africa under the AERC programme remained strong, and I firmly believe it is one of the best programmes on the continent for future economist policymakers. Consequently, in 2022, I reapplied to the same university and was once again offered the scholarship. Now, with only a few months remaining to complete the programme, I have come to appreciate that patience and hard work must be our anthem as scholars.

4. What motivates you in academia? Do you see yourself still active in academia in the next five years?

I wish to complete my Ph.D. in the coming five years. I believe that this high-calibre MPhil certificate I will be awarded soon is a good and solid foundation for me to qualify for a PhD in economics or other courses related to economics. My main motivation stems from my firm belief that the research environment can provide many solutions for our society. I believe that the success of any intervention must be grounded in research outcomes. From an MPhil to the PhD level, I will be able to make a meaningful impact by influencing policy implementation in my country and across Africa. Ultimately, I envision myself as an active participant in the policymaking process.



5. How were you able to balance between being part of the programme and your other life commitments?

Being a single individual pursuing this programme outside my home country, it has not posed a significant challenge for me. The programme has been my primary focus, and I haven't faced much external pressure, such as

First, a student who wants to be a part of the CMAP must understand that this programme is one of the best on the continent when it comes to economics and a big platform for good networking since it exposes you to various scholars.

from family or relatives, that could potentially affect my programme's success. However, I recognize that this situation might differ for married individuals and domestic students. It would be beneficial if AERC could consider such circumstances and provide appropriate support.

6. Any word of advice for students who aspire to be part of the CMAAE/ CPP/CMAP programmes in the near future?

First, a student who wants to be a part of the CMAP must understand that this programme is one of the best on the continent when it comes to economics and a big platform for good networking since it exposes you to various scholars. The second is to be patient and work hard because the journey is not a free lunch, it requires some effort to be invested. In addition, they need to start improving some of their technology skills and quantitative background before applying to any CMAP programme and I am sure the same applies to the CMAAE. The language must not be an obstacle for them to apply, also *"if somebody did it, it means you can do it as well, and if nobody did it, be the first person to do it"*

7. How does it feel to get recognition for exemplary performance? When starting the programme, did you see yourself emerging among the top students?

Yes, every success in life not only in academia, tends to increase self-confidence. It was a great experience, and I am confident, that I will still be enjoying the programme since the journey is ongoing. In conclusion, African governments and international organisations across the world are called to support this programme (financially or any other kind of support), to allow the AERC to increase the rate of students admitted per year in the CMAP for the future of our continent.



Inter-ministerial Policy Dialogue on Strengthening Primary Healthcare Financing and Service Delivery in Africa - Kenya

Promoting results and outcomes through Policy and Economic Levers (PROPEL) Health Project under funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recently organised a collaborative platform for inter-ministerial dialogue between the National Treasury and Economic Planning and the Ministry of Health in Kenya.

PROPEL Health aims to improve the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems through: policy development and implementation; adequate, predictable, and sustainable health financing; enhanced government stewardship, transparency, and accountability, and use of evidence-based advocacy approaches at global, national, and subnational levels to promote best practices. It focuses on family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH), primary healthcare,

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and the integration of FP/RH with HIV and maternal and child health (MCH). The broad objectives of PROPEL Health are being implemented by Palladium in collaboration with AERC, Avenir Health, Population Reference Bureau, RTI International, Samasha Medical Foundation, and the White Ribbon Alliance.

Under PROPEL Health objectives 1, 2 and 3, the implementing partner recognises that the inter-minister policy dialogue is essential to improve health finance performance to achieve universal health coverage (UHC). The focus of the policy dialogues to strengthen PHC financing and health outcomes is to raise awareness of the need for adequate, predictable, efficient, and sustainable financing of primary care as the best mechanism to improve health outcomes. The Inter-Ministerial Policy platform enhances collaboration, synergy, and alignment of resources.

The Policy Dialogues are envisaged to increase the effectiveness of both ministries in identifying challenges in resource planning and budgeting and facilitate agreements to expedite the release of allocated funds, track utilisation, and enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency of PHC spending over the budget cycle at the national and sub-national levels. The expected outcome of the policy dialogues is to facilitate co-creation and launch of a collaborative framework between the Ministry of National Treasury and Economic Planning and the Ministry of Health to strengthen PHC financing and health service delivery. This is expected to propel better health outcomes in an efficient and effective resource allocation and spending space in the health sector.

PROPEL Health organised two sessions for Inter-Ministerial Policy Dialogues that were held in Kenya.



1. Consultative Inter-Ministerial Policy Dialogue on Preliminary Findings on Status of Health Financing and Service Delivery in Kenya - August 14-15, 2023.
2. Validation Inter-Ministerial Policy Dialogue on Report on Health Financing and Service Delivery Review and Draft Collaborative Framework PHC - August 30-31, 2023.

The policy dialogue meetings were attended by senior government staff from the State Departments of National Treasury, Economic Planning, Medical Services and Public Health and Professional Standards from the Government of Kenya. These policy dialogues will generate evidence and policy actions to improve health outcomes and service delivery in Kenya.

The policy dialogues are envisaged to increase the effectiveness of both ministries in identifying challenges in resource planning and budgeting and facilitate agreements to expedite the release of allocated funds, track utilisation, and enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency of PHC spending over the budget cycle at the national and sub-national levels.



Participants during the National Policy workshop in Burundi.

National Policy Workshop in Burundi

The Centre Universitaire de Recherche pour le Développement Economique et Social (CURDES) recently disseminated three research papers generated by the BMGF/AERC-supported project, the Digital Financial Services for the Poor in the East African Community (DFSP-EAC) at City Hill Hotel, Bujumbura, Burundi.

The opening speeches were made by Dr. Reverien Nizigiyimama, the Dean, Faculty of Economics and Management; Prof. Gilbert Niyongabo, the Director, CURDES; and Dr. Mark Korir, Manager of training (AERC). The workshop was attended by industry players including the Central Bank of Burundi, the Ministry of Finance, microfinance institutions, banking associations, academia, journalists, and other players.

Michael Armel Ndayikeza presented, on behalf of the other two co-authors, Arcade Ndoricimpa and Jean Claude Nyamweru, the paper titled “Utilisation du mobile money: une analyse comparative du Burundi avec d’autres pays de la Communauté d’Afrique de l’Est (CAE) *{Mobile Money Usage: A Comparative Analysis of Burundi with Other Countries in the East African Community (EAC)}*”.

Prof. Arcade Ndoricimpa presented the paper titled “Le mobile money pour une inclusion financière accrue au Burundi *{Mobile Money for Increased Financial Inclusion in Burundi}*” which was co-authored by Jean Claude Nyamweru and Michael Armel Ndayikeza. The third paper, titled “*Mobile Phone Ownership: A Bridge to Provide Banking Services to the Unbanked*” was presented by co-authors Saidi Bizoza and Gildas Irakoze.

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AERC Round Up



Prof. Gilbert Niyongabo, Director, CURDES addressing the delegates.



Saidi Bizoza making a presentation.



Michael Armel Ndayikeza presenting their paper.



Prof. Arcade Ndoricipma making his presentation.



Gildas Irakoze making his presentation.

>>> The discussions were coordinated by Mr. Boaz Nimpe, the Chairman, Association of Banks and Financial Institutions, Burundi, with papers generating a lot of interest among the industry players. With Kenya leading in the East Africa region, it was noted that there was great potential for Burundi to upscale its financial inclusion position.



Delegates following discussions after the presentations. Front, from left: Mr. Boaz Nimpe, the Chairman, Association of Banks and Financial Institutions, Burundi, and Dr. Reverien Nizigiyimama, the Dean, Faculty of Economics and Management, University of Burundi.

AERC -World Bank Kenya Analytical Programme on Forced Displacement Inception Workshop

– World Bank KAP-FD – June 12-13, 2023

AERC in collaboration with the World Bank held an Inception Workshop on June 13 – 16, 2023, under the project Kenya Analytical Programme on Forced Displacement (KAP-FD). The thematic research project is benchmarked on the application of datasets collected by the World Bank and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in collaboration with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) on the living conditions of refugees and host communities.

The motivation of the project was to provide important evidence and lessons to better inform measures that improve the socioeconomic opportunities for the people living in forced displacement. This is through gathering more granular evidence under the Kenya Analytical Programme on Forced Displacement (KAP-FD). The data sets: Socioeconomic Surveys (SESS); Kenya Continuous Household Survey on Refugees and Host Communities (KCHS Integrated Survey); and Kenya COVID-19 Rapid Response Phone Survey (RRPS), produced broad socioeconomic data on host communities and the forcibly displaced in Kenya.

KAP-FD seeks to, among other things, build the capacity of early-career researchers in Kenya to use displacement data. The project envisages building the capacity of early career researchers by facilitating and utilising the data produced under KAP-FD and/or previous projects. The early career researchers are mentored through expert reviews and peer learning, to conduct forced displacement-related research while ensuring the wide use of data collected in World Bank-supported surveys.



Participants during the AERC-World Bank inception workshop under KAP-FD.

During the inception workshop, 12 proposals were presented by 17 early career researchers in attendance. Of the 17 researchers, eight were female and nine were male. Three of the researchers had experienced

The motivation of the project was to provide important evidence and lessons to better inform measures that improve the socioeconomic opportunities for the people living in forced displacement.

forced displacement settings. The Inception Workshop had four resource persons, namely, Prof. Rosemary Atieno and Prof. Germano Mwabu, both from the Department of Economics and Development Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya; Prof. Tomson Ogwang, Faculty of Social Sciences, Brock University, Canada; and Prof. Erick Nyambedha, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Maseno University, Kenya. The World Bank team consisted of: Dr. Precious Zikhali, Dr. Patrick Mutinda Muthui, Antonia Johanna Sophie Delius and Anne Kittony.

Training

The Agriculture, Nutrition and Health 2023 (ANH23) Conference, Malawi

On June 27-30, 2023, the AERC ran an invited panel at the Agriculture, Nutrition and Health 2023 (ANH23) Conference at the Bingu International Conference Centre (BICC), Lilongwe, Malawi. The opening speech was made by Prof. Théophile Azomahou, AERC's Executive Director, while the keynote speech was made by Prof. Shelly Sundberg, the Acting Deputy Director, Nutritious Food Systems and Women's Empowerment, Agricultural Development, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).



Dr. Lanoi Maloi (AERC,) presenting during the workshop



Dr. Maloy (left) and other presenters during the workshop.

Dr. Mark Korir presented the introductory paper of the Special Issue of the Food Policy Journal titled "Role of Policy in Reducing Malnutrition in SSA". Dr. Lanoi Maloi, the gender specialist, and Dr. Maureen Cheserek, the nutrition expert, presented on gender mainstreaming and nutrition aspects of the Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets (PASHFARM) project, respectively. The climax of the panel presentations was the launch of the project, after which the event was concluded with a project meeting between the BMGF and the AERC.

Impact Evaluation

Retooling Workshop

On July 10, 2023, Prof. Théophile Azomahou, AERC’s Executive Director, officially opened the Impact Evaluation Retooling Workshop that was attended by 40 faculty members and researchers from 18 SSA countries at the Fairview Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. The face-to-face component of this blended workshop ran from July 10-15, 2023, while the online phase ran from July 17-21, 2023.

The faculty members were drawn from the CMAP, CMAAE and CPP universities, while the researchers were drawn from the pool of prospective researchers who had submitted research proposals under the PASHFARM project. Their research proposals were under review for consideration for research grants.

The objective of the workshop was to equip faculty members and researchers with tools for impact evaluation that are key for individual research and teaching of research methods, econometrics, quantitative methods, and project analysis at the graduate level.

The workshop was supported by the University of North Carolina (USA), the American Institutes of Research (AIR), the UNICEF and the AERC-BMGF PASHFARM project. The purpose of the PASHFARM project is to rigorously research retail markets for nutritious foods for

The objective of the workshop was to equip faculty members and researchers with tools for impact evaluation that are key for individual research and teaching of research methods, econometrics, quantitative methods, and project analysis at the graduate level.



The Participants of the Impact Evaluation Workshop at the Fairview Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.



improved policy development, programme design and health in SSA.

The workshop facilitators included Dr. Sudhanshu Handa, Institute Fellow, American Institutes for Research (AIR); Prof. Gustavo Angeles, University of North Carolina, US; Dr. Kaku Damoah, UNICEF Office of Research, Innocenti; and Dr. Duah Dwomoh, University of Ghana.



Facilitating the workshop: Prof. Gustavo Angeles, Dr. Duah Dwomoh and Dr. Sudhanshu Handa.

Training

CMAP JFE 2023

The 2023 virtual CMAP JFE commenced on July 3, 2023, and will end on October 13, 2023. This is the 31st session of the CMAP JFE since 1993, and the fourth to be conducted virtually. A total of 111 Master's students drawn from nine public universities in the CMAP network are in attendance. This is higher than the 95 students from eight universities who participated and successfully completed the CMAP JFE in 2022. The last three years in which the programme has been delivered online have witnessed remarkable improvements in student enrolments, reaching up to double the total number of students in the four or so years preceding the virtual JFE. Hence, the virtual delivery of the programme, coupled with AERC's decision to open up JFE participation to additional network universities other than the traditional Category "B" institutions, has broadened the reach and inclusivity of the programme. In terms of gender, 41 out of a total of 111 students in the CMAP JFE 2023 are female, which represents 37% female participation. Graduate courses in seven elective fields are being offered in the CMAP JFE, facilitated by a team of 14 internationally recruited visiting lecturers and professors.



CPP JFE 2023

The 2023 virtual CPP JFE commenced on July 10, 2023, and will end on November 10, 2023. This is the 19th edition of the CPP JFE since the inception of the programme in 2002. A total of 31 PhD students are participating in the virtual CPP JFE, which is notably higher than the 25 students who completed the programme in 2022. The students are drawn from seven CPP network universities (Abomey-Calavi in Benin; Cape Town, South Africa; Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Cote d'Ivoire; Ibadan, Nigeria; the Witwatersrand, South Africa; and Yaoundé II in Cameroon) and none non-CPP university (Cape Coast). This is the first time the University of Abomey-Calavi is participating in the JFE, following its admission into the CPP as a non-host university in 2022, alongside the University of Cheikh-Anta-Diop in

Dakar, Senegal. In terms of gender, it is worth noting that 15 (48%) of the 31 PhD students in this year's CPP JFE are women, a commendable improvement over the 32% female enrolment in 2022. This is the highest percentage of women in the CPP JFE, surpassing the previous record of 45% attained back in 2017.

Five elective fields are on offer in the CPP JFE this year, in addition to a common course on *Research Methods and Computer Applications* that aims at improving the students' research and analytical skills. Francophone students are also benefiting from specialized tutoring in the English language to enhance their writing and presentation skills, as well as interaction with lecturers and fellow students. A team of 10 internationally recruited visiting lecturers and professors has been recruited to offer the CPP elective courses.

Official Opening of CMAP-CPP JFE 2023

The official launch of the CMAP-CPP JFE 2023 was conducted virtually on July 10, 2023. It featured a keynote address by Prof. Théophile Azomahou, AERC's Executive Director, as well as remarks by various JFE visiting professors and students. A highlight of the event was the awarding of the AERC Academic Advisory

Board Prize to the two best-performing students from the previous cohort. These were Ms. Chisomo Chikuni from the University of Malawi, who was the best master's student in the CMAP JFE 2022, and Mr. Cédric Nizigire, a Burundian PhD student studying at the University of Dar es Salaam, who was ranked first

in the CPP Class of 2021 (JFE 2022). Both students expressed their gratitude to AERC for their support in their studies and urged their fellow students in the current JFE session to work hard and take full advantage of the opportunity provided by AERC to participate in the prestigious, world-class programme.

CMAAE Shared Facility for Specialisation and Electives (SFSE) 2023

This year's CMAAE SFSE began on August 1, 2023, and will run up to November 30, 2023, marking the 18th edition of the four-month programme. A total of 129 students from eight accredited CMAAE universities (Egerton; Haramaya; LUANAR; Makerere; Nairobi; Pretoria; Sokoine; and Zimbabwe) are in attendance, including several non-CMAAE students from the University of Pretoria. In terms of gender, 43% of the SFSE 2023 students are female. While the SFSE has been conducted entirely online in the past three years, a hybrid or blended version this time around, combining both virtual and face-to-face delivery modalities is being implemented. In all, 14 courses are being offered in the SFSE 2023, spreading across the four CMAAE fields of specialisation, namely: Agribusiness Management; Agricultural and Rural Development; Agricultural Policy and Trade; and Environmental and Natural Resource Management. The online official opening of the

SFSE 2023 was done on August 1, 2023, and was presided over by Prof. Théophile Azomahou, Executive Director, AERC. Prof. Vinesh Maharaj, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of Pretoria, was also present and made some welcoming remarks. In attendance too were Dr. Selma Karuaihe, the Ag. Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Rural Development and Extension, University of Pretoria, lecturers and the SFSE 2023 visiting lecturers and professors. The opening session ended with the award of the CMAAE Academic Board Prizes to the best-performing students of the SFSE 2022. The best student was Mr. Olieko Sulman Owili from the University of Nairobi, while the first and the second runners-up were Mr. Rodrick Mbirizi and Ms. Jacqueline Patrick Majuva from LUANAR and Sokoine universities, respectively.



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In all, 14 courses are being offered in the SFSE 2023, spreading across the four CMAAE fields of specialisation, namely: Agribusiness Management; Agricultural and Rural Development; Agricultural Policy and Trade; and Environmental and Natural Resource Management.

Testimonial

by the Best SFSE 2022 Student

My name is Sulman Olieko Owili, a CMAAE student at the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi, Kenya. I am currently writing my thesis on the effects of the intensity of adoption of agroecological fruit fly management on technical and eco-efficiency among smallholder mango farmers. I am planning to enrol for a PhD position in either Agricultural Economics, Econometrics, or a related field in 2024. In all likelihood, my doctoral research will primarily revolve around the nexus between uncertainty, climate change, and eco-efficiency.

I specialised in Agricultural Policy Analysis at the SFSE, with a specific bias towards mastering Quantitative Methods for Policy Analysis because of my intrinsic passion for Econometrics and Statistics. While the SFSE 2022 was conducted virtually, the experienced instructors drawn from across Africa and beyond made the programme lively. The SFSE offered a unique platform for engaging with varied perspectives and learning from peers and experts in the field.

I extend my profound gratitude to the AERC for their generous support towards my studies and the privilege of being a part of the broad AERC alumni network. Additionally, I am thankful to the University of Pretoria for providing an enabling environment that facilitated the acquisition and refinement of my technical skills. Equally, I express my appreciation to the University of Nairobi for sponsoring my master's studies. A heartfelt acknowledgement goes to the CMAAE Academic Advisory Board for acknowledging me as the Best CMAAE SFSE 2022 Student and bestowing upon me the esteemed CMAAE Academic Advisory Board Prize. This



Mr. Olieko Sulman Owili, the best overall SFSE 2023 student, University of Nairobi, displaying his plaque, the CMAAE Advisory Academic Board Prize

accomplishment has truly humbled me, and I earnestly hope that it will pave the way for new opportunities within academia and the broader professional arena.

To the incoming cohort of SFSE 2023, my advice to you is to dare to dream big

and set audacious goals as you embark on this transformative expedition. But also remember that it is the sweat, the toil, the late-night study sessions, the fortitude to seek help when needed, and the determination to get back up after every fall that will transform those dreams into reality. Life is a tapestry of choices and trade-offs – choose what truly resonates with your passion and dedicate yourself to it. But in doing so, do not forget to uplift a colleague when you can. I can attest that my achievement was, to a great extent, a consequence of the time I spent assisting my peers, whether debugging codes or elucidating seemingly intricate concepts during group discussions or one-on-one interactions.

Never underestimate the potency of curiosity, critical thinking, and originality as you journey further into the realms of academia. Embrace the joy of learning, seek answers to the questions that intrigue you, question assumptions, challenge the status quo, and fearlessly explore new frontiers. In the words of Steve Jobs, “*Here’s to the crazy ones... Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.*”



AERC economics researchers: Media training workshop

The AERC, in partnership with the ODI, held a media training workshop for researchers in economics on **September 11, 2023, at 11:00 AM (GMT+3)**. The media training was offered by [Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja](#), Senior Research Associate at ODI. Dr. Wignaraja has undergone formal media training by Reuters and BBC journalists during his 15-year career as a senior official of Asian Development. He has had wide experience in media interviews including 30 interviews with top-tier media – including CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera – in a three-week period in July 2022 on the debt and economic crisis in Sri Lanka.

PROPEL Health – Health Financing: Policy, Advocacy, and Governance Training Workshop, Botswana

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), in collaboration with Palladium and the University of Botswana, conducted a USAID Funded PROPEL Health Training Workshop on Policy, Advocacy and Governance in Health Financing from June 26 -30, 2023, in Francis Town, Botswana.

The training had 19 participants from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Health Policy Research and Development (HPRD), Health Services Management (HSM) Departments, NAHPA and the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health at the University of Botswana. The aim of the training was to facilitate: the sharing of global experiences in policy, advocacy and governance in health financing;

skills and experiences on how to improve intersectoral collaboration in policy and governance; identification and analysis of challenges in policymaking; identification of policy, governance and advocacy opportunities for advancing UHC; skills for initiating policy dialogue between the Ministry of Health and various government and private sector agencies (including writing policy briefs).



Participants during the USAID-funded PROPEL Health Training Workshop.



Participants during the training workshop held by AERC in Accra, Ghana.

GPIR Final Review and Policy Brief Training Workshop -Accra, Ghana

AERC held a 6-day hybrid Final Review and Policy Brief Training Workshop for GPIR Country Case Studies in Accra, Ghana, from April 11-16, 2023. The Project Coordinator of the country case studies phase was Prof. Erik Thorbecke (Cornell University), with Yusi Ouyang (University of Tulsa), Miguel Nino-Zarazua (UNU-WIDER) and Prof. Carlos Gradín (UNUWIDER) as the project steering committee members. Ten country case study papers were presented at the workshop. The final draft papers presented were:

- COVID-19, poverty and income-related health inequalities in South Africa: Do Social protection programmes protect? by Omotayo and Adebayo.
- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on income inequality in Cameroon. The influence of employment status by Deffo, Tchoumdop and Kamga.
- Income inequality and growth: Calibration and simulation for the Kenyan economy by Mbara.
- Recessions, depressions, and response of poverty to growth and inequality in South Africa: The implications for the COVID-19 economic shocks and other future shocks by Ngepah.
- The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security in Tanzania: Quantitative analysis using time series data approach by Albiman and Hemed.
- Coping strategies, standard of living and inequalities during the COVID-19 period by Giovanis and Öznur.
- Re-examining the growth-poverty-inequality-redistribution nexus in an unstable low-income economy – a case study of Malawi by Chipeta.
- Poverty, inequality, and inclusive growth dynamics: Evidence from Nigeria's panel household surveys by Edeh and Ozor.
- Inégalités d'Accès à l'éducation et insertion des jeunes sur le marché du travail au Togo: une approche par le logit multinomial ordonné (*Inequalities in Access to Education and Integration of Youth into the Labor Market in Togo: An Approach through Ordered Multinomial Logit*) by Koudjom, Ngoko, Limazie and Mafang.
- Examining poverty dynamics in Ghana: Evidence from longitudinal and repeated cross-sectional data by Gafa, Sendza and Hodey.

Off the Press New Publications

Research Paper 539: Gender and Firm Performance in Africa: Does the Business Environment Play a Moderating Role?

Date

2023-09-25

Authors

Okumu, Ibrahim Mike
Nathan, Sunday
Bbaale, Edward

Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium

Abstract

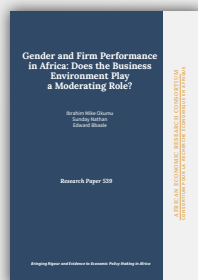
This paper examines the moderating role of the business environment in the relationship between the gender of the top manager and firm performance (measured as sales per employee), and whether female-managed firms perform better the higher the proportion of female employees in the firm. The paper uses World Bank Enterprise Survey data of 14,561 firms from 29 African countries collected between 2010 and 2016. The descriptive analysis reveals significant variation in the performance and experience of business environment constraints that disadvantage female-managed firms. Controlling for potential endogeneity and country fixed effects, we show that female-managed firms are associated with lower performance compared to male-managed firms. Electricity outages, informal competition and corruption account for the performance gap between female- and male-managed firms. However, we show that large female-managed firms perform better than large male-managed firms. Overall, the results imply that strengthening Africa's business environment is central to closing the performance gap between male and female managers.

URI

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Collections

Environmental Economics



Research Paper 540: The Devil is in the Details: On the Robust Determinants of Development Aid in G5 Sahel Countries

Date

2023-09-28

Authors

Bayale, Nimonka
Kouassi, Brigitte Kanga Kouassi

Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium

Abstract

This paper introduces model uncertainty into the empirical study on the determinants of development aid at the regional level. This is done by adopting a panel Bayesian model averaging approach applied to the data of G5 Sahel countries, spanning the period 1980–2018. Our results suggest that among the regressors considered, those reflecting terrorist attacks, trade stakes including military expenditure, socioeconomic prospects and institutional conditions tend to receive high posterior inclusion probabilities. The study explores the relationship between these regressors and foreign aid by employing the fully modified ordinary least squares (FMOLS), the continuously updated fully modified (CUP-FM), the dynamic ordinary least squares (DOLS) long-run estimators, and the Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) panel causality test. The results highlight three concerns that may justify aid flows towards G5 Sahel countries: (a) peace and security considerations, (b) the economic interest of donors, and (c) recipient economic needs. The paper recommends that Sahel countries should strengthen international cooperation for security and peace, in compliance with goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations (UN) and goal 13 of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063.

URI

<https://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/handle/123456789/3645>

Collections

Financial Economics



Off the Press New Publications

Research Paper 541: Conflict and Input Misallocation in the Manufacturing Sector: Evidence from Ethiopia

Date

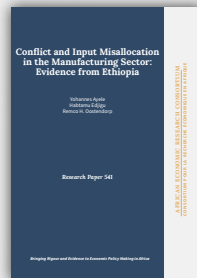
2023-10-05

Authors

Ayele, Yohannes
Edjigu, Habtamu
Oostendorp, Remco H.

Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium



Abstract

This paper examines the impact of civil conflict on the functioning and accessibility of markets for production inputs and their allocation among manufacturing establishments. It uses the 2014-2018 annual census of Ethiopian manufacturing firms. We exploit the time and spatial variation in conflict intensity at the district (Woreda) level, and compare whether production input choices of Ethiopian large and medium manufacturing firms in the same sector differ across districts experiencing differential changes in conflict intensity. We find that conflict-induced distortion results in manufacturing firms substituting domestically produced for imported inputs. As a result, firms in high-conflict districts use a relatively lower value of foreign-produced materials and a relatively higher value of domestically produced ones in production. These distortions are likely among the microeconomic mechanisms through which conflict affects aggregate economic outcomes. Furthermore, we find that conflict intensity induces manufacturing firms to substitute non-production workers (skilled workers) with production workers (unskilled workers). Finally, we estimate the impact of conflict-induced input distortions on the output value of manufacturing firms and find that this distortion can account for about 40% of the fall in output value of firms in high-conflict districts.

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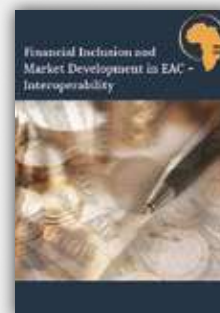
<https://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/handle/123456789/3648>

Collections

Development Economics



The AERC published a Special Issue of the Food Policy journal titled “*Role of Policy in Reducing Malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa*” from the AERC-BMGF project, Agricultural Policy Analysis for Nutrition Outcomes (AFPON). The journal was edited by Prof. Chris Barret, the Editor in Chief, Food Policy. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/food-policy/vol/113/suppl/C>.



The AERC published a book length volume on *Digital Financial Inclusion and Market Development in East African Community Economies* Edited by: Dianah Ngui, Abebe Shimeles, Njuguna Ndung'u, David Cracknell and Jonathan Greenacre [Book Volume](#).

Meet Our New Staff



Dr. Abbi M. Kedir

Dr. Abbi M. Kedir joins the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) as a Director of Research. Dr. Kedir is an associate professor and senior lecturer in international business in the Management School of the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom (UK). He is an associate staff of Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow. He got his PhD in Economics from the school of Economics, University of Nottingham in 2003.

Dr. Kedir brings over 25 years of work experience in economic research, policy dialogue and training of PhD students in various universities and institutions in Africa (e.g., ENSEA). He is a regular contributor of teaching in econometrics, development economics and research methods at the AERC Joint Facility for Electives (JFE) and has served AERC as a resource person since 2013.

In addition to long years of services in UK academia, he has experience of working both in government and international organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).



Ms. Beatrice Atieno

Ms. Atieno has joined the AERC as a Grants Manager - Promoting Results and Outcomes through Policy and Economic Levers (PROPEL) Health Kenya. She joins AERC from Chemonics International and has over 12 years of progressive work experience in grants management, business development and financial support. She has worked in various countries in Africa with various donors and international organisations including USAID, FCDO, GAC, African Legal Fund-USAID/EU, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine-USAID/DFID, World Learning/USAID EECN among others.

Ms. Atieno has a Master's degree in business administration - strategic management from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. In addition, she has a Bachelor of Commerce degree, Accounting option, from the University of Nairobi. She is a Certified Public Accountant of Kenya (CPAK) from Strathmore University and has a Diploma in NGO Management from Kenya Institute of Management. She is also a member of ICPAK and AWAK.



Ms. Sylvia Awuor Ayon

Ms. Ayon is a global health advocate and civil society leader in Africa working to create political will for improved health outcomes in Africa. Her areas of expertise include program management, policy analysis; building political support for health outcomes; influencing decision making processes; mobilizing civil society and community voices for action.

Ms. Ayon has extensively worked on building and strengthening civil society and community organizing for health Advocacy in Africa. Her health advocacy areas include, but not limited to, Tuberculosis, COVID 19, HIV, UHC, PHC,FP/RH, Malaria, Child Health, Nutrition, NCDs, RMNCAH+N, Health Equity and Gender

Ms. Ayon has published several peer-reviewed articles and blogs including on: Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and HIV Integration; strengthening primary health care; investments in Health and lived experiences of people who use drugs in Kenya and Eastern Africa.

Ms. Ayon holds a Master's in Business Administration (MBA), with specialisation in Programme Management and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biochemistry.

Fare Thee Well



Dr. Janvier Nkurunziza, an Esteemed AERC Resource Person Passes On

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Dr. Janvier Nkurunziza, an esteemed, unassuming, and very valuable resource person in the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) network for more than ten years. Until his demise he was the Head of the Commodities Branch at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Geneva, Switzerland. He was directing research on the interaction between primary commodities production, trade, and use, on the one hand, and economic development on the other.

Prior to his current position, Janvier formerly worked as the Chief of Research and Analysis Section and was the Officer-in-Charge of the Africa Section, UNCTAD respectively; Macroeconomic Policy Advisor

at UNDP, New York; and an economist at UNCTAD and the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Janvier also lectured at the University of Yaoundé and the University of Burundi. He was a post-doc at Harvard University, and a visiting scholar at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. He was a consultant on a World Bank/University of Yale project. Janvier obtained a Bachelor's degree in economics at the University of Burundi, a Masters' degree in economics at Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia), and a Ph.D. in economics at University of Oxford.

Dr. Nkurunziza coordinated the production of flagship reports at UNECA, UNDP, and UNCTAD, including the Commodities and Development Report (CDR). Just last week

on the 8th of November 2023, he launched the 2023 CDR in Arusha, Tanzania at the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI), where he served as Adjunct Faculty until his premature death. He published dozens peer reviewed journal articles and chapters in edited books. Janvier was a Fellow of numerous academic and research institutions, including the Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) at the Oxford University; Africa House at New York University, and the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research interests included the study of commodity dependence and its implications for development, capital flight, the economics of conflict, and development macroeconomics issues such as investment, inflation, and economic growth. He has been a thought leader in the debates on economic development in Africa and in his home country Burundi.

Dr. Nkurunziza was an accomplished scholar and a great patriot. Thus, our deepest sorrow to have lost such a brilliant academic, policy analyst and an outstanding human being. He will stay in our memory and hearts forever! We send our most heartfelt sympathy to his family, friends, coworkers plus the entire AERC fraternity.

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Fare thee well, Prof. Rashid Mekki Hassan

The AERC was recently saddened by the demise of Prof. Rashid Mekki Hassan, who passed away on June 6, 2023. Prof. Hassan was a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development, and a great friend to many of those he worked with over the past few years. His contribution as a professor and researcher in the field of natural resources and environmental economics has had a significant impact on the environmental policy field and his many achievements will continue to form part of his legacy.

Prof. Hassan was one of the notable academic researchers affiliated with AERC. He passed on after he had just been ranked #2 in South Africa and #1341 in the world according to Research.com, which is a leading academic platform for researchers. These results were released in the 2023 Edition of the Ranking of Best Scientists in the field of Economics and Finance.

Prof. Hassan was an active member of the AERC Network and contributed to collaborative postgraduate and research programmes at AERC. Africa has truly lost a notable academic, mentor and top-tier researcher.



Dr. John Randa, Former AERC Research Manager Passes On

Dr. John Randa a former research manager at the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has passed on. He was research manager at AERC between 2006-2007. John was a senior economist at the World Bank office in Nairobi, Kenya. His main focus was on Macroeconomic and Fiscal Global Practice, where his duties emphasised on macro fiscal work in Kenya and Somalia country programmes. Between 2008 and 2011, he took external leave from the World Bank Group to be a senior technical advisor to the Governor of the Central Bank of Kenya. Before joining the Central Bank, he served as a member of the Monetary Policy Advisory Committee for over two years. John studied at the University of Nairobi, the University of Warwick, and the University of Oxford.

Dr. Randa was a senior economist at the World Bank office in Nairobi, Kenya. His main focus was on Macroeconomic and Fiscal Global Practice, where his duties emphasised on macro-fiscal work in Kenya and Somalia country programmes.



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