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AERC INSIGHT

The African Economic Research Consortium



Charles Soludo:
From village
boy to
Anambra
Governor-elect

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AERC 56th Biannual Research Workshop:

Redistribution
and Growth for

Poverty Reduction

**Africa's Role in the
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Digitalization of the AERC office environment - The EDMS Story

Documents such as business forms, reports, letters, memos, policy statements, contracts, agreements, etc. stored in box files have in the past formed part of AERC's multi-colored walls.

Note from the Executive Director

Dear Esteemed Readers,

You have just joined thousands of others who believe in what the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has been doing for decades. We welcome you to our second quarterly Newsletter this year!

The Insight keeps you updated on AERC's activities with interesting stories, reports, studies, publications, and testimonials. In this edition, we are excited to share news on the forthcoming AERC Biannual research workshop, a flagship event whose plenary attracts over 300 economists, researchers, academics, policy makers, non-state actors. It provides a forum for participants to interact with a worldwide network of professionals to discuss issues relevant to Africa's economic development. Other activities featured include collaborative research projects, training activities, events AERC is featured in, new publications as well as success stories from esteemed members of the AERC network family.

It brings me great pleasure to present in this edition, the inspiring humble background and shooting to fame story of our dear friend Governor Charles Soludo, who has risen through the ranks to become Anambra's Governor-elect. The success of our AERC Fellows is another focus, as we speak to Socrates Majune, a former CPP student of AERC

who won WTO's Trade Economist Thematic Award. Green innovation and Africa's role in the Green Transition also takes center stage in this edition as we continue building Africa's path to address climate threats.

The Insight creates a trustworthy and inspiring place for you to find everything you need to know about our capacity building through research and graduate training, and we do hope that you will get lost in our interesting narratives. AERC is 100% about making people like you happy with our impressive information sets. And thanks to people like you, we are Africa's number one rated think tank with the most significant impact on public policy.

We are glad you are interested in our capacity building and policy research activities and do hope that you will enjoy what we have to share in this issue of our Insight.

Welcome!

Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u

Executive Director, AERC

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Plenary Session

AERC Biannual Research Workshop Plenary Session

African Economic Research Consortium to host a Virtual Plenary Session on “Poverty, growth, redistribution, and social inclusion in times of Covid-19 pandemic in Africa”

Economists, Researchers and Policymakers Examine the Dynamics of Poverty, Growth, Redistribution, and Social Inclusion in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa.

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) will host its 56th Plenary Session on “**Poverty, growth, redistribution, and social inclusion in times of Covid-19 pandemic in Africa**” on **May 30, 2022**. The session will be held virtually where researchers, academics, policy makers, non-state actors and economists will discuss the mechanisms in which Covid-19 has affected the dynamics of poverty, growth, redistribution, and social inclusion in Africa. The official opening and keynote address will be by Prof. Leonard Wantchekon, Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University.

The plenary will seek to bring in sharp focus the opportunities and challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought in the areas of growth, poverty, redistribution, and social inclusion in Africa. Broad themes that will be covered in the plenary include: conception of frameworks that can forge an inclusive, rapid and sustained growth in Africa; policy options for redistribution and equal opportunities; mechanisms of which Covid-19 has

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shaped the nexus between growth, inequality, poverty and social inclusion; new insights emanating from recent work on inequality of opportunity and social inclusion in comprehending growth-poverty-inequality nexus; pathways and experiences of implementing social protection programs in Africa; and digital finance adoption and experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and how it is facilitating risk sharing and protection of millions of households from hunger and enabling interpersonal income transfers.

A range of diverse papers will be presented looking at different aspects of this subject matter. Prof. Emeritus Germano Mwabu, University of Nairobi will start the proceedings examining *Poverty Reduction through Growth, Redistribution and Social Inclusion in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic in Africa, The Underlying Mechanisms*. Next will be *Covid-19, poverty, and the role of social protection systems in Africa* by Dr. Kibrom Abay, Country Program Leader and Research Fellow. The third presentation by Prof Emeritus Erik Thorbecke, Cornell University will be on *The Interrelationship between Growth, Inequality and Poverty: Some Implications for Fighting the Covid Epidemic in Sub Saharan Africa*.

Plenary Session

Panelists



PROF. NJUGUNA NDUNG'U
Executive Director, AERC



PROF. FINN TARP
University of Copenhagen



HON. MTHULI NCUBE
Minister for Finance and
Economic Development of
Zimbabwe



DR. WILSON BANDA
Governor Reserve Bank of
Malawi



DR. DENNY KALYALYA
Governor Bank of Zambia



DR. JANE KIRINGAI
Chairperson, CRA Kenya



PROF. LEONARD WANTCHENKON
Princeton University



DR. SIMONE SCHOTTE
Research Associate,
UNU-WIDER



DR. ROSE NGUGI
Executive Director, KIPPRA



PROF. GERMANO MWABU
University of Nairobi



PROF. ERIK THORBECKE
Cornell University



DR. KIBROM ABAY
Country Program Leader,
and Research Fellow, IFPRI

News

Senior Policy Makers Reaffirm the Need to Address Climate Change in Africa for Economic Transformation

At the Senior Policy Seminar XXIV, held on 30 March 2022, on a Virtual Platform and hosted by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), on the theme: *Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa*, Senior Policy Makers and other stakeholders, private sector, international organizations, academia, and civil society, from around the continent adopted a declaration as an affirmation of their strong commitment to confronting climate change in African economies.



Declaration, March 30, 2022

We, African Senior Policy Makers and other stakeholders, private sector, international organizations, academia, and civil society actors assembled at the AERC Senior Policy Seminar XXIV,

Recognizing that although Africa accounts for less than 3% of the world's total greenhouse-gas emissions, it will bear the brunt of climate change. And that the region is already experiencing more frequent climate-induced natural disasters, hotter weather, erratic rainfall, and rising sea levels;

Further recognizing that Climate change has adverse implications for Africa's development, from health systems to agriculture, ecosystems, water

resources, energy resources and physical infrastructure, and threatens the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Noting that there is a need for African governments to scale up the availability, access, and affordability of digital agricultural technologies which are the key drivers of climate-smart agriculture interventions;

Also noting that for Africa to become a major player, it needs to urgently address the issues of lack of capacity and poor institutional frameworks;

Recalling that in their 2014 Malabo Declaration, African leaders pledged to spend at least 10% of their annual budgets on

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agriculture. However, to date, only a handful of countries have kept their promise.

Mindful that despite the high returns to African agricultural investments, Africa's agricultural expenditure as a share of total public expenditure averaged only 4% over the period 2000–2014 compared to 13% for East Asia and the Pacific, and 8% for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Appreciating that there is the need for increased financial support to build the capacity of national agricultural research systems, including meteorological agencies,

4%

Despite the high returns to African agricultural investments, Africa's agricultural expenditure as a share of total public expenditure averaged only 4% over the period 2000–2014 compared to 13% for East Asia and the Pacific, and 8% for Latin America and the Caribbean

Acknowledging that most Africans depend on the agricultural sector for their income and livelihoods, a climate-induced decline in agricultural productivity leads to significant decline in household income and therefore a massive fall in welfare

Acknowledging that most Africans depend on the agricultural sector for their income and livelihoods, a climate-induced decline in agricultural productivity leads to significant decline in household income and therefore a massive fall in welfare,

1. **Affirm** that protocols and programmes for supporting adaptation to climate change are designed to directly target the poor and most vulnerable in providing needed assistance;

2. **Commend** the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and partner development agencies and institutions for strengthening the evidence base for policy and programme design and implementation to improve agricultural productivity and address climate change risk, and that there is a need for concerted efforts to end the gender disparity in African agriculture;
3. **Take note** that Africa's agricultural sector requires greater government support given its role in poverty reduction;
4. **Commit** to promote the diffusion of climate-smart agriculture as well as strengthen national agricultural research and extension systems to provide information to farmers;
5. **Further commit** to remove existing structural inequalities by increasing the resilience of vulnerable ecosystems and social groups to the hazards of Climate Change and pandemics.



African Senior Policymakers challenged to Prioritise Climate Change in Development

Blueprints

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted a senior policy seminar, the twenty fourth in the series with the theme of *Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa*. The conference was held on March 30, 2022.

Four papers were presented followed by a policy roundtable. AERC used this seminar as the primary dissemination vehicle for the outputs of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) supported AERC collaborative research project on “Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA). The AERC - NORAD CCEDA project seeks to substantially enhance the capacity of African governments to deal with development challenges confounded by an increasingly disruptive environmental challenge. The overarching goal is to improve Africa’s readiness to confront climate and environmental shocks and leverage the opportunities they present through climate-smart sets of economic policies.

African policymakers have been challenged to prioritise the impact of climate change when designing economic development blueprints. The announcement was made by Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives



The overarching goal is to improve Africa’s readiness to confront climate and environmental shocks and leverage the opportunities they present through climate-smart sets of economic policies.

Hon. Peter Munya during the 24th Annual African Economic Research Consortium’s (AERC) Senior Policy Seminar.

While speaking on behalf of Hon. Peter Munya, Kenya’s Chief Administrative Secretary (Assistant Minister) Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, & Fisheries Mr. Lawrence Omuhaka said climate change has produced a domino effect

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and to power Africa's economic growth and prevent the worst consequences of climate change, researchers must spell out a proactive stance for African policy makers on managing climate change.

"Climate change represents a major threat to Africa achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to keep in mind that nearly all the impacts of climate change are exacerbated by inappropriate policy choices," Hon Munya said.

"Our very survival is linked to climate change as our food security rests on agricultural systems that still rely largely on low inputs, traditional tools, and the promise of rain – and are subject to the vagaries of drought and flooding."

Similar sentiments were echoed by Hon. Mthuli Ncube, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Zimbabwe.

"Climate change has a growing impact on the continent, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, low crop yields and production, droughts and erratic weather patterns. There's a need for the continent to commit to enhancing climate action and building resilience," Hon. Ncube said.

Themed "Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa", the forum cast the spotlight on policy proposals that can be adopted to shape Africa's response to climate change.

"Climate change has adverse implications for Africa's development, from health systems to agriculture, ecosystems, water resources, energy resources and physical infrastructure and threatens the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, there is a need for African governments to scale up the availability, access, and affordability of digital agricultural technologies, which are the key drivers of climate-smart agriculture interventions. And for Africa to become a major player, it needs to urgently address the issues of lack of capacity and poor institutions," AERC Executive Director Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u said.



Africa faces exponential collateral damage, posing systemic threats to its economies, infrastructure investments, water and food systems, public health, agriculture,

Our very survival is linked to climate change as our food security rests on agricultural systems that still rely largely on low inputs, traditional tools, and the promise of rain – and are subject to the vagaries of drought and flooding."

and livelihoods, threatening to reverse its modest development gains and slip into deeper levels of extreme poverty.

"Climate risk can be turned into an opportunity by leveraging climate-smart agriculture (CSA) innovations. Africa needs to urgently address the issues of lack of capacity and poor institutions," said Prof. Asafu-Adjaye of the African Center for Economic Transformation & School of Economics at the University of Queensland, Australia.

On her part, Dr. Adelaide Retselisitsoe Matlanyane, Former Governor, Central Bank of Lesotho said: "Despite having contributed the least to global warming and having the lowest emissions, Africa will bear the brunt of climate change."

This year's seminar assisted policymakers and other actors to better understand the impact of climate change on economic development, particularly focusing on policies that will build and strengthen the resilience of sub-Saharan African economies to ensure sustainability of growth and development.

The overarching goal of this year's seminar was to improve Africa's readiness to confront climate and environmental shocks and leverage the opportunities they present through climate-smart sets of economic policies.

To enhance mitigation and adaptation to climate change, African governments must make major structural investment and policy decisions that will influence the rate, structure and character of economic growth and development for the long term. This is especially so given that most infrastructure investments' are path-dependence and lock-in nature.

The AERC Senior Policy Seminar is an annual forum convened to provide high level African policy makers the opportunity to come together to learn about the results of AERC research, exchange policy experiences with each other and interact with AERC researchers in an atmosphere of peers. But above, adopt policy propositions that enrich economic management choices and designs applicable in their respective countries.

Prospects for a post-pandemic economic recovery in Africa

The African Economic Consortium (AERC) was recently represented in a high-level conference that had been set up to map policy reforms to put Africa on a growth trajectory as the COVID-19 pandemic runs its course.

The forum, hosted by the University of Columbia, was used to launch a report recently published on “The Economic Impact of COVID-19 and Prospects for a Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery in Africa.”

Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u, the AERC Executive Director was one of the speakers in this conference. “We know that inequalities can pose a major obstacle to raising and sustaining a growth trajectory that is instrumental to eradicating poverty in the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic impacted times. Poverty, growth, redistribution, and social inclusion in times of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Africa is one area of focus for the AERC capacity building and knowledge framework,” said Prof. Ndung’u.

With the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, the poverty situation has worsened across sub-Saharan Africa, but perhaps the lessons learnt so far and those that were shared on this forum could go a long way in fostering a renewed inclination and energy on reforms and structural economic transformation in the continent.

One of the key presenters in this forum was Prof. Joseph Eugene Stiglitz, an American economist and public policy analyst, who is a professor at Columbia University in the United States of America (USA). Prof. Stiglitz is a recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences and the John Bates Clark Medal.

He is known for his *pioneering work on asymmetric information*, which focused on income distribution, risk, corporate governance, public policy, macroeconomics, and globalization. Stiglitz has written and co-authored an innumerable number of academic



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papers and scholarly books, as well as some non-academic bestsellers. The latest of these are: *Measuring What Counts: The Global Movement for Well-Being in 2019* and *Rewriting the Rules of the European Economy: An Agenda for Growth and Shared Prosperity*, in 2020. During the Clinton administration, Prof. Stiglitz was the chair of the President’s Council of Economic Affairs (CEA). He is also a former senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank.

Another key presenter was Robert J. Shapiro is the cofounder and chairman of Sonecon, LLC, a United States private consultancy for economic and security-related issues that has built a reputation on a range of policy matters, including climate change, intellectual property, securities fraud, healthcare reform, demographics, the resilience of the electric grid to cyberattacks, and blockchain technologies. He is known for advising public officials, including President Bill Clinton, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, senior members of the Obama cabinet and administration, numerous US senators and representatives, and the Director of the International Monetary Fund. He is currently a professor at Columbia University.

The other presenters in this conference were Sheila Jasanoff, Harvard University; Heinrich Volmink, Public Health Consultant; and Lyal White, Contextual Intelligence. The event was moderated by Wilmot James, Loren Morales Kando and Harlowe Zetting from Columbia University.

LAUNCH OF THE REPORT
Prospects for a Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery in Africa

Mon. Feb. 28, 2022
 1:00 – 2:30pm ET

Register:
bit.ly/3rqkaqO

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 BRENTHURST FOUNDATION

Speakers:
 Joseph Stiglitz (Columbia University)
 Njuguna Ndung’u (African Econ. Research Cons.)
 Sheila Jasanoff (Harvard University)
 Heinrich Volmink (Pub. Health Consultant)
 Lyal White (Contextual Intelligence)
 Robert Shapiro (Columbia University)

Moderators:
 Wilmot James (Organizer)
 Loren Morales Kando (Publisher)
 Harlowe Zetting (Coordinator)

“ Charles Soludo’s research works at the AERC are still visible and relevant in the policy making arena.

-Njuguna Ndung’u

Alumni Focus



Charles Soludo: From village boy to Anambra Governor-elect

Charles Soludo, a village boy who has risen through the ranks to become an icon in the annals of the Nigerian history, has not only put his name on ‘hall of fame’ but also inspired many by his recent feat at the just concluded Anambra gubernatorial election.

The first class graduate just like the Biblical Joseph, portrays the character of a fighter who never gives up amid all odds. His exploits would have wowed many who ever doubted a village boy from the slum could have become a governor of one of the most elite states in Southern Nigeria. Today, the village boy is now the Anambra Governor-elect.

Background

Going down memory lane, Charles Chukwuma Soludo was born July 28, 1960 (pre-independence) into the family of Pa Simeon Soludo. According to findings, Soludo’s mother, Mrs. Mgbafor, was said to have died during the civil war when the economist was barely eight. Thereafter, he grew up in his Isuofia village situated at Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra where he often played football.

Soludo attended the neighbouring Uga Boys High School and became the senior prefect, according to TheCable report.

He reportedly proceeded to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Enugu state where he bagged a first class honours degree in Economics in 1984. From the same educational institution and department, he grabbed a master’s degree in 1987 and a doctorate in 1989 – graduating as the best student at all three

levels. In 1998, he became a professor of economics at UNN.

The former Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor holds the title of the third-highest national honour – Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR).

It was really inspiring when Soludo won the APGA primary election ticket back in June 2021, described himself as “a poor village boy whom God has lifted and gifted”.

Notable Achievements

Soludo, a member of the British Department for International Development’s International Advisory Group, is the second ex-CBN governor to emerge as a state governor in the country. The first was Clement Isong, former governor of Cross River state. Isong was CBN governor from 1967 to 1975. He later became the Cross River governor from 1979 to 1983.

It will interest you to know that, Clement Isong’s portrait was placed on the Nigerian N1000 note by Soludo.

He has also worked as a consultant for a number of international organisations, including The World Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the United Nations Development Programme, the list endless.

Professor Soludo attended over a dozen specialized courses and has had extensive research, teaching and consultancy works in different areas of economics.

He was named CBN governor on the 5th May, 2004. As Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria since May, 2004, Prof. Soludo has refocused the Central Bank as an effective monetary authority and successfully implemented a fundamental restructuring which has led to unprecedented consolidation of the Nigerian banking system.

On account of this, the Nigerian banking system has been rated the fastest growing in Africa and one of the fastest growing in the world. He has also championed the establishment of the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), a continental, private sector driven, investment bank.

He is promoting the Financial System Strategy 2020 (FSS 2020), the blue-

Today, the village boy from Isuofia is now the incoming governor of Anambra. Truly, Soludo has proven that “where there is a will there is a way”. You can also make the big difference if your mind can picture it. Success has no limit!



print to grow Nigeria’s financial system to become Africa’s financial hub and to drive the Nigerian economy into the global league of top 20 economies by 2020. For his achievements, Professor Soludo is the recipient of scores of awards and recognitions from civil society organizations; NGOs; private sector organizations; religious groups; the Press; professional associations; student unions; universities; among others.

Before becoming Anambra Governor-elect

In 2009, Soludo declared his intention to govern Anambra. As the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), he vied for the 2010 governorship election in the state. Peter Obi, candidate of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), won the election – defeating Chris Ngige, former governor, and Soludo, who came third.

Four years later, the economist left the PDP and joined APGA ahead of the 2013 governorship poll in the state. The screening committee disqualified him and some other aspirants, and Willie Obiano, the current governor, emerged as the party’s candidate and won the election.

In February 2021, Soludo officially announced his intention to contest the governorship election under APGA.

Owing to an internal crisis in APGA, he was initially not recognised as the party’s candidate for the November 6 election. Soludo was later reinstated by the court and the supreme court affirmed him as the eligible candidate.

Today, the village boy from Isuofia is now the incoming governor of Anambra. Truly, Soludo has proven that “where there is a will there is a way”. You can also make the big difference if your mind can picture it. Success has no limit!

Top 20

He is promoting the Financial System Strategy 2020 (FSS 2020), the blue-print to grow Nigeria’s financial system to become Africa’s financial hub and to drive the Nigerian economy into the global league of top 20 economies by 2020.

This article originally appeared in Vanguard Nigeria.

Socrates Majune

AERC Fellow Wins WTO's Trade Economist Thematic Award

In what way did your time as CPP at AERC prepare you for this opportunity?

The work that I do at the WTO is more of practical: dealing with data and writing research. The Thesis part of the CPP program has been helpful in this regard. The bi-annual conferences also exposed me to networks that have ended up as mentors and high-calibre research.

How would you describe your experience at the WTO so far, being the first Kenyan to ever be selected for the fellowship?

My experience has so far improved in two ways: a good working culture and research skills. The work environment at the WTO is harmonious where I am surrounded by a helpful supervisor and colleagues. I have also expanded my network of friends who I would never have met had I not joined the WTO. With regards to my work, I so far have a grasp of handling international trade data, specifically cleaning it. I have also learnt the intuition of creating research problems from data or rather "letting data speak to research." Lastly, I have identified some of the "burning issues" in the area of international trade through my interactions with colleagues.



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How do you intend to use the experience gained from the WTO to transform lives back at home?

Since my plan is to return to the University of Nairobi where I teach, I foresee that my skills will be vital in supervising students who write in the area of international trade. I also plan to utilize my skills in running trade-related projects under the WTO Chairs Programme at the university. Lastly, with the networks that I have created, I plan to actively partake in the formulation of trade policies at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Enterprise Development and advocacy groups such as the Kenya Association of Manufacturers.

You have been feted before for your work, tell us about the time you won the Wallace E. Tyner award.

I was awarded the Wallace E. Tyner award in 2021 for my work on intra-Africa trade in services in Africa and the AfCFTA. This award is by the Global Trade Analysis Project. Given that little has been written on trade in services in Africa, this award was a recognition of my effort alongside co-authors, Dr. Evelyne Kihui and Ms. Judy Kiende, both of KIPPRA. Some of the key findings is that: promoting trade in goods also boosts trade in services; reducing the deficit in infrastructure - such as internet spread - and regulatory quality across African countries is likely to boost trade in services within the continent.

You will be at WTO for a year, what next for you in terms of career?

My current plan is to return to the university of Nairobi. As for the future, I shall cross the bridge when I reach there.

Word of advice for other CPP scholars on what opportunities to be on the look out for?

A typical PhD class has students who are more academically oriented than others (some people possibly just want the certificate and are contented with their current workplaces). My advice



to academically oriented students whose ambition is to have a career in lecturing, research and international organizations - like

I was awarded the Wallace E. Tyner award in 2021 for my work on intra-Africa trade in services in Africa and the AfCFTA. This award is by the Global Trade Analysis Project.

the WTO - is to take a more practical approach to their coursework. By this I mean, ensure you write most of your term-paper assignments to publishable standards so that the end goal is not only to get a good grade in class but have work that can be upgraded to a journal paper and published. CPP students should also endeavour to attend academic conferences, preferably international ones, to create networks with other students/researchers from all over the world. This also means that they should strive to write proposals that can be sponsored by organizations such as AERC, where I have learnt a lot from the bi-annual conferences.



World Bank/ African Economic Research Consortium 2021 Visiting Scholars Program

Overview

The World Bank-African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Visiting Scholars Program offers an opportunity for four-month research placements for AERC scholars to join the World Bank and its partners to contribute to World Bank research programs and projects in their field of expertise and to enhance their own research relevant to economic development in Africa.

The program aims to: (i) boost economic policy research in Sub-Saharan Africa; (ii) strengthen linkages between African scholars and the global research community in the areas of economic policy, academic research, and graduate training; and (iii) enhance skills and research outputs (i.e. publications and coursework) of African scholars by providing them direct access to wider and better information, network, economic research and data accessible via the World Bank and partner organizations.



The program aims to: strengthen linkages between African scholars and the global research community in the areas of economic policy, academic research, and graduate training

2021 Visiting Scholars



Okumu has research interest in economic growth and development, firm and household level behavior, public finance, corruption and governance.

Ibrahim Okumu

Ibrahim Okumu is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Economics, Makerere University. He is also an Associate Researcher at the: Economic Policy Research Center, Makerere University; Centre for Dynamic Macroeconomic Analysis, University of St Andrews; and Centre for Basic Research, Kampala Uganda. Okumu has research interest in economic growth and development, firm and household level behavior, public finance, corruption and governance. He has peer reviewed publications in: Development Policy Review, European Journal of Development Research, Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, African Development Review and South African Journal of Economics among others.

He joined Africa Chief Economist's Office (AFECE) the period January 2022 to June 2022. As a Visiting Scholar, Okumu is contributing to the World Bank's 21st Century Africa Report. The report explores how Africa can claim the post-COVID 21st Century through enhancing productivity, private sector investment and industrialization towards inclusive structural transformation; and also using the World Bank Enterprise Survey data from 31 African countries to examine: the moderating role of the business environment in the relationship between gender of top manager and firm productivity.

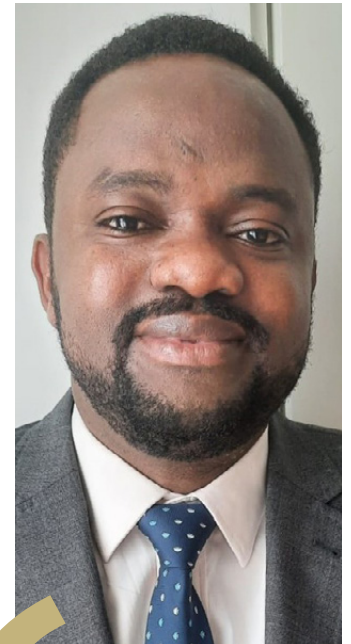
Okumu holds a PhD in Economics from the University of St Andrews (United Kingdom), MA Economics of McMaster University (Canada) and BA Economics of Makerere University (Uganda).

Victor Ajayi

Victor Ajayi is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Cambridge Judge Business School, University of Cambridge. Previously, he was a Visiting Scholar at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the aegis of the AERC/IMF Visiting Scholar Program and a Consultant at the Macroeconomic Policy, Forecasting & Research Department of the African Development Bank. He has been involved in a number of research and policy engagements with African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Centre for Environmental Economics and Policy for Africa (CEEPA), The Productivity Institute, and Office of Gas and Electricity Market (Ofgem), United Kingdom.

He holds a PhD in Economics from Loughborough University, United Kingdom as a School of Business and Economics (SBE) Scholar and an MSc in Energy Economics and Policy (with Distinction) from University of Surrey as a Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) Scholar. His general research interests lie at the intersection of energy & environmental economics, public economics, development economics and applied econometrics. His articles have been published in leading international journals, including World Development, Energy Economics and The Energy Journal.

As a Visiting Scholar, Victor will be working on two regional studies: Digital Africa for Inclusive Growth Research Program and The Economics of Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa. >>>



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2021 Visiting Scholars

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With a broad experience working in the academic sector and research in Africa, Dr Janvier is an Associate Professor. Over the last three years, in addition to the teaching role, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management at the University of Goma in Eastern DR Congo.

Janvier Mwishu Kasiwa

Janvier Mwishu Kasiwa holds a PhD from the University of Yaounde II-Cameroon. He also holds a Master of Philosophy in Mathematical Economics and Econometrics and a Professional Master in Project analysis and evaluation. His interest areas are in the application of microeconomic approach and statistical techniques on a range of topics including agriculture and land access, health and nutrition, labor, welfare, gender and women empowerment, entrepreneurship and corporate finance.

With a broad experience working in the academic sector and research in Africa, Dr Janvier is an Associate Professor. Over the last three years, in addition to the teaching role, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management at the University of Goma in Eastern DR Congo. As a researcher, he belongs to the network of the African Economic Research Consortium and his recent research has focused on the effects of access to agricultural land, particularly by women, and nutrition outcomes in Africa. He also worked as senior adviser within the provincial ministry of Finance and economic affairs in North-Kivu, DR Congo.

As a Visiting Scholar at Africa Chief Economist's Office (AFECE), he is supporting the "Improving Africa's Land Governance for Economic Transformation" regional study.



2020 Visiting Scholars

Pouirkèta Rita Nikiema
(January 2020 - June 2020)
Ramaele Moshoeshoe
(February 2020 - June 2020)
Tsambou André Dumas
(February 2020 - June 2020)

2019 Visiting Scholars

Dr. Romuald Foueka
Dr. Trust Reason Mpofu

2018 Visiting Scholars

Dr. Elizabeth Nanziri Lwanga

SPOTLIGHT:
AERC Research contribution
on Green Growth

Africa's Role in the Green Transition Amidst Global Uncertainty

By Njuguna Ndung'u and Abebe Shimeles

Introduction

There is evidence and perhaps no denying that we are at the cusp of experiencing climate change-induced catastrophe that could be irreversible.

The time is ticking for any meaningful action to make a difference. The transition to green energy sources is needed with urgency and scale to stem the risk of climate change related shocks. The main challenge is the enormous cost to the world economy which for centuries has relied on energy sources derived from fossil fuel, such as oil and gas, coal and others that polluted the environment through the CO₂ emissions. A recent publication of the International Energy Agency estimated in its [World Energy Outlook 2021](#), that over

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Opinion

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30 trillion USD is needed up to 2030 for a green transition to take place effectively across the globe. Certainly, affordable technology in renewable energy sources is progressing rapidly, making the outlook to green transition hopeful. On the other hand, energy prices are rising despite diversified energy sources, partly due to ever rising energy demand, and at the same time regulated energy markets largely driven by geo-political considerations, obviously including Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This brief examines the role Africa can play in the global effort to transit towards green and renewable sources of energy. It explores the challenges posed by climate change shocks in Africa and their impact on long-term growth and household welfare. Another developing policy area is that of central banking and supply shocks induced by climate change, yet central banks do not have supply side instruments to mitigate the effects on food and energy prices and monetary policy effectiveness. The brief thus provides a discussion of the current sources of energy consumption, potentials for green and renewable energy as well as fiscal affordability and sustainability to ensure the green transition.

Africa's challenges and opportunities for a green transition

Evidence suggests that Africa contributes less than 3% of the global green gas emissions yet suffers the most from climate change shocks. The main factors that expose African countries to climatic shocks include the source of livelihood, which predominantly originates from agriculture that on the average employs over 55% of the work force and contributes close to 20% of GDP. This suggests the low productivity pervading the sector where over 95% of farming relies on rain-fed agriculture and is prone to extreme weather variability. As a result, seven of the ten most vulnerable countries to climate shock in the world are in Africa.

The AERC's research^[1] in this area show that higher temperatures, coupled with reduced and/or variable rainfall, could lead to reduced agricultural output which will be transmitted to domestic prices and



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inflation. This can happen in several ways. First, the negative impact on agricultural productivity will contribute to food shortages, causing food prices to rise when there is an excess of demand over supply. This is more likely in countries where the foreign exchange reserve and fiscal space is very weak to establish buffer against severe drought, flood, or other sources of crop failures including locust attacks such as experienced recently in the horn of Africa. Second, climate shocks could translate into higher prices through trade as most African countries depend on primary commodities for their exports. Export contractions and likely import expansion could lead to weakening of exchange rate, hence drive domestic prices upwards, especially in situations of fixed exchange rates regimes. Finally, droughts in the horn of Africa will affect food prices and energy prices due to dependence on hydroelectricity generation.

There is no dispute today that a transition to green and renewable energy source is necessary to save the planet.

The question will remain about sequencing of the transition and cost of adjustment both in the short, medium, and long-term on countries and continents.

A combination of food and energy prices is a major supply shock on inflation. Monetary policy instruments in these countries do not have supply side instruments to mitigate these effects. Without any buffers on food or energy, these countries end up using the demand sides instruments to dislodge the effects of a plateau of high prices and thus plunge the economy into a short-term recession.

As Africa envisages to build climate shock resilient economy through industrial policies and other strategies of automation, the energy demand is likely to accelerate which requires a careful approach to mitigation and adaptation methods. Currently over 80% of Africa's energy consumption is generated from natural gas, coal, and oil, which are fossil-fuel based and contribute to greenhouse effects. The rest is accounted for by hydro, solar power, geothermal, solar thermal and biofuel that are green and **renewable sources of energy**. In addition, close to 20% of African countries are exporters of oil on which their economy depends for foreign exchange earnings, government revenue and employment. Hence, transitioning to green and renewable energy sources will come at a heavy cost. It is also important to note that Africa's consumption of energy is the lowest in the world. The percentage of households that have access to electricity is less than 40% at the continental level, with

the situation even worse in rural areas. It is difficult to imagine rural transformation without access to reliable and adequate energy. Studies have shown that rural electrification in Africa is not an easy fit even when there is strong government commitment. Most households do not afford to be connected to the grid and even if they do through some government subsidizes, they sparingly consume electricity because they cannot afford the bills, their income flows are low and erratic. The median price of electricity in 2021 in Africa is over 30% higher than the world average. In some African countries, the difference is over 200%. This simply suggests the need for a relatively cheaper and abundant source of energy to realize Africa's economic transformation. Certainly, many African countries have potential for hydro, wind, and solar energy because of the geography.

Policy implications

There is no dispute today that a transition to green and renewable energy source is necessary to save the planet. The question will remain about sequencing of the transition and cost of adjustment both in the short, medium, and long-term on countries and continents. When it comes to Africa, it is important to clearly understand which type of economic activity (and hence carbon emission) is causing serious havoc on livelihoods. Is it local greenhouse gas generated by deforestation? Poor land management? Rapid urbanization and congestions? Or the global emissions that tend to cause the maximum impact? Assessing the production and consumption side of carbon emissions and potential incentive alignments will offer African governments a better chance to negotiate globally and join alliances to manage climate change. Uninformed and sudden shift in production or consumption behaviour could prove to be very costly. It is however very important that African countries continue to support and actively implement policies that could reduce the

pace of carbon emissions as it aspires to accelerate towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Nearly 49 out of 54 African countries ratified the Paris Agreement to build climate resilient and low-carbon economies in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which is estimated to cost 3 trillion USD by 2030. Given the considerations in the preceding paragraphs, it is possible to suggest the direction of Africa's future engagement in transitioning to green and renewable energy sources:

- Building climate resilient economy based on green and renewable energy sources is paramount for Africa. This can only be achieved through concerted global cooperation and partnership where African countries are supported through capacity building, access to affordable financial resources, technology, and market to undertake the transition.
- The distribution of natural endowments that facilitate the production of green and renewable energy sources, such as hydropower, solar, wind and others are not even across the continent. Intra-Africa collaboration, and trade in energy could accelerate the transition to green economy.
- Macroeconomic policies, including valuation of assets, monetary policy, debt, and public finance need to account for climate-related shocks and risks.
- Agricultural practices and policies that will support and create a sustainable green revolution given that smallholder agriculture dominates the region and livelihoods of majority households.

REFERENCES:

[1] Asafu-Adjaye (2022) "Macroeconomic consequences of climate change in Africa and policy implications" AERC Working Paper

Letter to the Editor of Financial Times on Green innovation in Africa as a path to address climate threats. (Njuguna Ndung'u, 13th May 2022).

Green innovation is Africa's path to address climate threats

As your piece on the historic drought in the Horn of Africa underscores (“Delayed rain and conflict leave Horn of Africa at risk of famine”, Report, May 4), the impact of climate change is not years down the road, but already severely affecting economies and livelihoods.

Africa has contributed a mere 3.8 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions but is suffering the brunt of the effects of global warming — compounded by a looming debt crisis and the pandemic.

Increased temperatures and droughts will not only affect economic stability but other dimensions of wellbeing, including food supply shocks that drive inflation and energy supply shocks due to reliance on hydroelectricity.

Nominal exchange rates are also swiftly depreciating, raising the cost of food and fuel imports, which will feed into domestic inflation. Water scarcity will trigger more frequent, more intense conflicts among pastoralists, affecting food security for millions across the continent.

Our research on the macroeconomic impacts of climate change on Africa show that some countries, such as Ethiopia, could experience at least a 15 per cent decline in household income, all while food prices could increase by more than 50 per cent.

While the economic outlook appears grim, however,

there is a path forward. The Covid-19 pandemic can be an opportunity for Africa to launch a green innovation-led recovery that would not only speed up growth, but also address climate change and other issues threatening Africa's future.

Our projections show this green innovation could grow Ethiopia's gross domestic product by over 3 per cent. What is crucial for agriculture-dependent countries is investment in climate-smart agriculture, while accounting for climate shocks in central bank policy responses.

Njuguna Ndungú

Executive Director, African Economic Research Consortium
Former Governor, Central Bank of Kenya Nairobi, Kenya

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Events



AERC Holds in country Dissemination Workshops and Regional Policy Forum for the Growth Sectors for Youth Employment (GSYE) in Africa Project

Through the support of INCLUDE, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), in conjunction with the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and Overseas Development Institute (ODI) conducted collaborative research on “Income and work for young men and women in Africa: A Political Economy and Social Equity Approach to the Employment Potential of Specific Sectors and Subsectors in African Economies”.

The research undertaken in nine different countries namely Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and Uganda, was disseminated in the various countries in March.

The in-country dissemination workshops took place with the support of the Think Tanks in the respective countries. The workshops provided a platform for the dissemination, analysis and discussion

of the research findings in the country case studies targeting policymakers and key stakeholders that can drive policy implementation and have feedback on the study as input into the GSYE Research Project for further policy engagement.

The Regional policy Forum for the GSYE project was held virtually on March 28, 2022. Prof. Njuguna Ndungu the AERC Executive director shared the welcome

remarks. The forum was graced by Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, International Labour Organization (ILO) Assistant Director-General, Regional Director for Africa who delivered the keynote speech. The forum attracted over 100 participants from different countries. The objectives of the forum were to:

- ✓ Provide insight on promising economic sectors or value chains for job creation for young men and women in selected countries in Africa
- ✓ Provide policy actors with a platform to discuss the identified economic sectors for job creation in Africa and how both local and foreign investors can invest in these sectors or value chains,
- ✓ Generate innovative ideas and progressive partnerships to promote equal access and opportunity for youth to these new sources of work and income, addressing inequality related to gender, socio-economic background, and place of residence in Africa.

AERC Conducts a Retooling Workshop for Faculty from Underrepresented Countries and Groups

It is widely known that public universities in fragile and post-conflict sub-Saharan African states lack adequate human and institutional capacity to conduct quality, graduate level training of economists as well as policy-relevant research that will feed into policy formulation for sound management of economies in those countries.

Most of these universities are not members of the AERC network and, therefore, do not benefit from institutional and related capacity-building support that AERC offers to other public universities in sub-Saharan Africa. Part of that support is usually in the form of re-tooling workshops, which AERC conducts to enhance the quality of graduate training in Economics through re-training of faculty members from the collaborating universities in current and emerging issues in their fields of specialization. The aim being to ensure that their knowledge and skills are up to date and are comparable to international standards.

To this end, the AERC with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), conducted a virtual faculty re-tooling workshop from 14 - 25 March 2022 specifically targeting faculty members from universities in fragile, post-conflict and other underrepresented countries. A total of 37 faculty members (of whom nine were women) from universities in the listed countries were in attendance.

Distribution by nationality and gender of participants in the faculty retooling workshop

	Nationality	Male	Female	Total
1	Burkina Faso	1	-	1
2	Burundi	4	-	4
3	DRC	2	-	2
4	Guinea	3	-	3
5	Kenya		5	5
6	Lesotho	2	2	4
7	Liberia	5	-	5
8	Madagascar	1	-	1
9	Mali	1	-	1
10	Mozambique	7	-	7
11	Sierra Leone	1	-	1
12	South Sudan		1	1
13	Togo	1	1	2
	Total	28	9	37

The specific objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity among the faculty members on advances, current and emerging issues in the core fields of *Microeconomics*, *Macroeconomics* and *Quantitative Methods*. In addition, the

workshop exposed faculty members to emerging pedagogical or instructional methods, in the delivery of courses in accordance with international best practices.

Collaborative research projects workshops

The AERC conducted various workshops where researchers had an opportunity to showcase their study findings and receive comments from a team of experts in their studies. The workshops held included:

Date	Project	Project Coordinator
January 18-19, 2022	Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa Mid-Review workshop	<i>Prof. John Asafu-Adjaye University of Queensland, Australia</i>
January 20-21, 2022	Growth Sectors for Youth Employment (GSYE) Final Review Workshop	<i>Prof. Aly Mbaye, Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD)</i>
January 24, 2022	Benchmark Models for Macroeconomic Policy Management in Africa report review meeting	<i>Dr. Sayed Timuno, MEFMI,</i>
January 25-26, 2022	Addressing health financing vulnerabilities in Africa due to the covid-19 pandemic project mid-review workshop	<i>Prof. Germano Mwabu, University of Nairobi</i>
March 22 – 23, 2022	AERC-IDRC inclusive finance in fragile and post conflict states in Africa final review workshop	<i>Prof. Anke Hoeffler, University of Konstanz</i>
March 31 – April 1, 2022	AERC-IDRC-OXFAM impact of Covid 19 pandemic on livelihoods in Africa final review workshop	<i>Dr. Sara Stevano, SOAS, University of London</i>
April 4 – 5, 2022	BMGF financial inclusion and market development in EAC Economies Framework phase final review workshop	<i>David Cracknell, First Principles Consulting</i>
April 13 – 14, 2022	Value chain development, trade and economic transformation in Africa framework phase final review workshop	<i>Prof. Jaime de Melo, University of Geneva</i>

Strengthening Technical Capacity

In the period January to March 2022 Research Department held four technical training workshops. Three of the workshops were on Research Methods and Report Writing focusing on Women and Fragile and Post Conflict States in sub-Saharan Africa and one was on Health Systems Evaluation and Policy Analysis for Non-State Actors.

Dates	Training	Participants	Number
January 24 -February 4, 2022	Technical Workshop Research Methods and Report Writing -Anglophone	Women	34
February 7-18, 2022	Technical Workshop Research Methods and Report Writing - Francophone	Women	31
February 14-25, 2022	Technical Workshop Research Methods and Report Writing	Fragile and Post Conflict Countries	18
March 21-23, 2022	Technical Workshop on Health Systems Evaluation and Policy Analysis for Non-State Actors in sub-Saharan Africa	Non-State Actors	18

From the 65 women in sub-Saharan Africa trained on research methods 29 were offer proposal development grants funded by SIDA and those from Fragile and Post Conflict state were offered eight grants funded by Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

AERC Develops Online Course Materials for Master's and PhD Bridge Programme

One of the innovative programmes to have been introduced by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is the Master's and PhD Bridge Programme with the aim of addressing the limited competitiveness of potential students from underrepresented countries and groups (women, post-conflict and fragile states, etc.) for admission and performance in the AERC training programmes.

Under the programme, participants undertake an eight-week (two months) intensive skill enhancement on *Quantitative Methods*, *Microeconomics* and *Macroeconomics*, which are pre-requisite courses for the Collaborative Masters and PhD Programmes. Students who successfully complete the bridging programme are expected to form the pool of students to be enrolled into the AERC's Collaborative Master's Programme (CMAP) in Economics, the Collaborative Master's in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE), and the Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP) in Economics.

Since the inception of the programme in 2017, the delivery of the Bridge Programme has been face-

to-face at a centralized venue. However, to enhance efficiency and broaden reach, the operational modality of the AERC collaborative training programmes has significantly transformed to virtual learning delivered through synchronous lectures via the Zoom platform and AERC's Learning Management System (LMS), complemented by the AERC eLibrary. To this end, the AERC has engaged a team of experts from its network of universities with a variety of expertise and experience in graduate teaching and academic research to jointly develop online course materials for the Master's and PhD Bridge Programmes, which are openly accessible to all on the AERC's Learning Management System.



The AERC eLibrary

The AERC continued to pay attention to strengthening the underlying online infrastructure supporting its networked services to meet the changing needs of AERC audiences for digital content formats.

To provide students with easy starting points, the library developed a growing set of online subject guides. Each guide highlights potential sources of background information, likely reference works, useful databases, information about call number ranges, and other helpful links. Lib-Guides (subject guides) continued to serve as one of the main access points to electronic resources and print materials that are important in the different subject fields. The guides also served as a tool to assist in integrating e-library resources and services into the JFE/SFSE Programme. Several initiatives

and innovations have been undertaken in the AERC Library during the year. These include:

- ✓ The Institutional Repository on D-Space collection grew from 1,100 items in 2020 to 2,127 items. The number of users of the digital collections went up to 288 and the page views increased to 7,826.
- ✓ Comprehensive and coherent provision of effective, efficient, and sustainable knowledge and information resources, technologies, systems, and services were

developed. Users now have access to 36 on-line databases, 21 of which carry full text content. The number of Lib-Guides published and made available to users increased to 34.

- ✓ Innovation and continuous improvement of digitization initiatives: A complete list of digital collections is now available. The library implemented the Access to Memory content system and repository allowing users to search across all digitized collections online.
- ✓ Cataloguing and classification of print copies in the library and processing into the system.
- ✓ Using the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Article Exchange service, which allows lending libraries to upload electronic articles, book chapter and other electronic format materials to be shared among its users. The library also engaged other libraries for collections and resources that were needed by the users.



7,826

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Off the press

New AERC books and
other publications

Collaborative research and other reports published recently include the following:

- *Coping with a Dual Shock: The Economic Effects of COVID-19 and Oil Price Crises on African Economies* by Théophile T. Azomahou, Njuguna Ndung'u, & Mahamady Ouedraogo.
- *Regional Perspectives on the Future of Work: Sub-Saharan Africa* by Victor Okoruwa, Tomson Ogwang & Njuguna Ndung'u.
- *Waving or Drowning? The Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on East African Trade*. The Report was published jointly by the AERC and the TMEA.
- *Growing with Debt in African Economies through Improved Governance: Options, Challenges and Pitfalls*, Volume 30, Issue Supplement One: Edited by Njuguna Ndung'u and Abebe Shimeles.
- *Share The Love: Parental Bias, Women Empowerment, and Intergenerational Mobility* by Théophile T. Azomahou, Elizabeth Asiedu, Yoseph Getachew, and Eleni Yitbarek: The work was published in the *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, November 2021, vol. 191, Pages 846-867.
- *Africa's Role in the Green Transition Amidst Global Uncertainty* by Njuguna Ndung'u and Abebe Shimeles.
- *Macroeconomic Consequences of Climate Change in Africa and Policy Implications* by Njuguna Ndung'u, Abebe Shimeles (AERC) and John Asafu-Adjaye.

AERC Technology Adoption and Cybersecurity improvements

To improve adoption of technology, the AERC IT team has focused on increasing digital competencies of staff through continuous training and incorporating practices that ensure product ownership by the user departments.

These are key enablers for the success of AERC's digital evolution. The introduction of a product-based management is geared towards providing clarity of accountabilities in the lifecycle of IT enabled products and services. This covers implementation and operationalization and ensures technology solutions support and enable programme objectives.

With increased dependency

on technology, AERC's cyber risk exposure has increased exponentially. In response, efforts are underway to strengthen cyber risk ownership across the programmes and operations and integrate cyber risk fully into organizational decision making. Continuous cyber security awareness is ongoing through an automated learning platform that tailors training interventions

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based on individual cyber risk ratings. Technologies to reduce the time to identify threats and enable autonomous responses to prevent, compromise and improve resilience have also been put in place. These include a cloud-to-cloud backup solution to ensure business continuity in the event of impairment of the primary AERC cloud infrastructure.

Information Technology modernization is a core component in reducing AERC's present and future operational cost disparity, by prioritizing the ability of ICT to support AERC with effective and efficient technology. It is essential, therefore, to focus on upgrading aging infrastructure. In this regard, the AERC recently invested in new generational servers with high performance and capacity specifications providing enhanced throughput to AERC's server-based IT applications. Owing to the consistency in form and architecture, the servers are easier to manage and administer in terms of operation and maintenance.

Digitalization of the AERC office environment - The EDMS Story

Documents such as business forms, reports, letters, memos, policy statements, contracts, agreements, etc. stored in box files have in the past formed part of AERC's multi-colored walls.

The manual way of handling documents yielded to the need to procure large desks to place documents, more shelf cabinets for storage and a not so ecofriendly working environment to the "save a tree" campaigners. For these reasons and others, a conversation on how to best manage a growing storage cost and an accessibility headache to documents was born.

The goal to digitalize AERC's administrative operations and programme delivery was highlighted by the 2020-2025 digital strategy with the IT department identifying key technology processes, systems and operations whose capacity to implement and improve would lead to achievement of various key strategic objectives. Central to an operational Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and a centralized document storage was the need to manage, store and associate documents in a concise and effective manner. An Electronic Document Management (EDM) guaranteed major productivity and performance increases through application of new technology to documents and document processing.

Harnessing information technology to manage documents presented an unwavering discussion within departments on effective data management, function integrations, quality control and accessibility to valuable information within AERC. The journey to digital document optimism began in 2020, with the identification of a partner to implement the EDMS. The need

to deliver the project on time and scope was critical due to COVID-19 that necessitated a work from home environment, this created a backbone for use of virtual technologies like the EDMS.

AERC's EDMS integrates with the Navision dynamics ERP system providing a centralized storage of transactional information, the system further provides organizational, departmental and individual sites/pockets whose control and function resides within the Microsoft SharePoint portal. It promises major

productivity and performance increases through integration opportunities, secure storage of documents and a paperless mode of operation to achieve the business need for productivity improvement in the short run and improved organizational effectiveness in the long run.

Despite a few challenges with uptake of new technologies; stakeholder involvement and participation on the system use have been critical in achieving great milestones to realize the true value of the EDMS.

The story of a digital enabled office continues; the blue box files are fading, the offices are cleaner, the desks will become smaller and sound of paper in printers is fading. The mindset to innovate and to utilize technology remains key within AERC and the actualization of the Electronic Document Management System is a step in the digital direction.



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Collaborative research projects

The African Economic Research Consortium's (AERC) collaborative research projects have continued to team up African researchers and their counterparts elsewhere to generate a critical mass of policy-relevant literature for African academic and policy communities. Each project involves several researchers and produces an array of framework papers and country case studies on the topic.

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Livelihoods in Africa

This project is jointly implemented by the AERC and Oxfam International, with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and comprises country case studies conducted in five African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia. The project is supported by a Steering Committee comprising Dr. Marzia Fontana (Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex, & IDRC), Dr. Sara Stevano (SOAS, University of London), Prof. Femi Ayadi (University of Houston Clear Lake), and Dr. Manasi Kumar (Department of Psychiatry at the University of Nairobi). Dr. Sara Stevano, a development and feminist economist with extensive experience on political economy and livelihoods, is the Project Coordinator.

Inclusive Finance in Fragile and Post Conflict States

This IDRC-funded project is supported by a Steering Committee comprising of Prof. Issouf Soumare (Université Laval (LABIFUL)), Dr. Christine Awiti (The Commonwealth), and Prof. Charles Adjasi (University of Stellenbosch). Prof. Anke Hoeffler (University of Konstanz) is the Project Coordinator, while Dr. Elizabeth Nanziri (University of Stellenbosch) is the project Co-Coordinator.

Health Care Financing and COVID-19 in Africa

This AERC-SIDA collaborative research project aims to examine the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic starting from the macroeconomic tremors it has already caused, and tracing them to the household and individual levels, with a focus on the health and healthcare for poor and vulnerable populations. Prof. Germano Mwabu (University of Nairobi) is the coordinator of the framework research phase of the project.

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AERC Round Up

Re-Examining Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationships in Africa

Under this NORAD-funded project, a total of 14 completed framework papers are under consideration for publication in a special issue of the *World Development Journal*. Five of the framework papers were presented at the IEA World Congress in July 2021 following an invitation by Dan Rodrik, the President of the IEA. Inspired by this project, the AERC Programme Committee chose the theme, “Growth, poverty, and inclusion in times of COVID-19 pandemic” for the December 2021 and June 2022 Plenary Sessions. The Project coordinator of the country case studies phase is Prof. Erik Thorbecke (Cornell University).

AERC-ERF Disruptive Technologies Project

The AERC and the Economic Research Forum (ERF) are collaborating on a project funded by the Carnegie Corporation that seeks to assess the impact of disruptive technologies in Africa. This project is informed by accelerations in technological progress over the last few decades that are affecting the future of work across the globe. These innovations and applications include artificial intelligence, robotics, digital finance, e-government, big-data, and blockchain technology, among others. The AERC is commissioning country case studies in four SSA countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa) that will tackle some of the issues surrounding disruptive technologies including, impacts of these technologies on labour markets and global competitiveness, digital penetration, and support for emerging industries. The project Coordinator is Dr. Shahrokh Fardoust (ERF).

Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA)

The project was launched in December 2019 with support from NORAD with the goal to radically improve the capability of the continent (and its policy makers) to confront climate and environmental change, and leverage the opportunities they present, as it confronts its development challenges. A total of 10 framework papers have been finalized, nine of which have been published in the AERC Working paper series. The project coordinator of the project is Prof. John Asafu-Adjaye (University of Queensland, Australia).

Digital Financial Services and Market Development in the East African Community Region (DFSP-EAC)

The project seeks to build a knowledge platform that leverages AERC’s network of institutions and policy outreach. The project is funded by the BMGF and seeks to achieve four objectives intended to impact digital financial inclusion in the EAC as a bloc: (i) working with EAC central banks and other financial sector authorities to achieve national as well as regional electronic payments interoperability alignment; (ii) build capacities (infrastructure and technology) of central banks to effectively oversee regional market developments; (iii) build replicable frameworks for advancing National electronic ID use with respect to financial services across the EAC; and (iv) build a learning sharing centre on consumer protection that can effectively guide the consumer protection mandate across the region including transparency on account terms and charges. The AERC appointed David Cracknell, the Managing Director of First Principles Consulting Limited as the project coordinator.

Building Policy Research Institutions to Support Human Capital in Africa (HCA)

This BMGF-funded collaborative research project covers seven sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries - Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda. The project is coordinated by Prof. Lant Pritchett (Centre for Global Development & Harvard University) and Prof. Haroon Borat (University of Cape Town).

Value Chain Development, Trade and Economic Transformation in Africa

The project aims to explore global and regional value chains’ development dynamics in terms of upgrading opportunities for African countries and the development policy implications and imperatives for economic transformation. The specific objectives of this SIDA-funded project are to evaluate the performance of African economies in global and regional value chains; increase understanding of drivers and benefits of value-chain trade integration; and provide specialized training on reforms that help improve business climate, strengthen value chains and development of selected sectors. Prof. Jaime De Melo (University of Geneva) is coordinating the project.

Work and Income for Young Men and Women in Africa: A Political Economy and Social Equity Approach to the Employment Potential of Specific Sectors and Subsectors in African Economies

The Growth sectors project aims to strengthen the evidence base on youth employment, drawing on research that will examine the growth sectors with the highest multipliers and potential to create employment opportunities in 10 African countries: Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and Uganda. This project, commissioned by INCLUDE Knowledge Platform and funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is being implemented by the AERC in collaboration with the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Professor Ahmadou Aly Mbaye, Rector at Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), is the Project Coordinator. Professor Mbaye is supported by a Project Steering Committee that includes senior scholars in employment and labour markets, and development policies.

The Data Governance and Sound Policy Making project

The AERC undertook this scoping study funded by the Hewlett Foundation to assess the opportunities, challenges, and risks existent in the current state of data generations, sharing protocols, and consistency of legislations. The AERC desires to encourage the widespread use of large data from different sources, its reliability, access, and availability. As such the AERC sought to mount a comprehensive programme to identify opportunities, constraints, and impediments to the use of data and evidence to inform economic policy decision-making in SSA. The AERC identified a multi-disciplinary team of experts comprised of economists, lawyers, statisticians and data technologists to undertake the scoping study. Prof. Bitange Ndemo, former Permanent Secretary in Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communication, and an associate Professor at the University of Nairobi School of Business Studies served as the project coordinator.

African Public Service Delivery Index (PSDI)

The African Development Bank (AfDB) funded project covers the full stream of public services that can help to enhance transparency and accountability in public service delivery across all the sectors in Africa. The activities of the project include designing and implementation of the public service perception survey in line with PSDI indicator framework aligned with the AfDB high five priority areas (Feed Africa, Light up and Power Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa, and Improve the quality of Life for the People of Africa).

Benchmark Models for Macro-Economic Policy Management in Africa

The AERC is undertaking this AfDB-funded project that is a scoping study on the status and usage of macroeconomic models in all 54 countries in Africa. The study focuses on: (i) documenting macroeconomic models used by government entities in Africa; (ii) identifying gaps in modelling frameworks; and (iii) providing recommendations to improve model development, adoption, and usage in Africa. AERC has subcontracted Dr. Sayed Timuno (MEFMI) and Prof. Alemayu Geda (University of Addis Ababa) to lead a team of experts to undertake the scoping study.

Climate Change and Central Banking in Africa

The AERC, with funding from Boston University's Global Development Policy Center, is undertaking a study on climate change and central banking in Africa. This is an offshoot to the Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA) project with the South African Reserve Bank and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) taking the lead, while the AERC is working with the IMF and Boston University. The AERC has engaged Prof. John Asafu-Adjaye to prepare the first research paper on Macroeconomic consequences of climate change in Africa and policy implications.

Policy Brief Training

AERC held a 3-day policy brief training workshop from May 3-5, 2022. A total of 56 researchers from 3 collaborative projects namely i) Impact of Covid 19 & Livelihoods in Africa funded by IDRC ii) Inclusive Finance for Fragile and Post Conflict States in Africa funded by IDRC and iii) Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA) funded by NORAD were trained. The main objectives of the training were to:

Build capacity and skills in communicating research to maximize its uptake and impact

Increase understanding of policy processes, policymakers' needs and the role of Policy Briefs

- Increase understanding of the role of social media in communicating research and how to engage on social media platforms
- Produce a draft Policy brief for each research project



Upcoming Workshops and Trainings

Summer Master Class on Research Methods - Prof. James Robinson and Prof. Maria Bautista

The research department has organized Summer Master Class by Prof. James Robinson and Prof. Maria Bautista from University of Chicago from June 13- 25, 2022. The Summer Master Class will cover topics on Research methods. The training will be hybrid where some participants will attend physically and others online. Registration date will be announced in due course.

June 2022 Biannual Research Workshop (Virtual)

June 2022 Biannual Research Workshop shall be held from May 30 - June 9, 2022. The 56th Biannual Plenary will be held on a virtual platform on May 30, 2022 on the theme 'Poverty, growth, redistribution, and social inclusion in times of Covid-19 pandemic in Africa.' Thereafter Group concurrent sessions and technical sessions for the Thematic Researchers will be held from May 31 -June 6, 2022.

Proposal Development Workshop (Part of June 2022 Biannual Activities)

The 37 research methods workshop grantees will present their proposals at Proposal Development Workshop to be held on June 13-14, 2022 as an extension June 2022 Biannual Activities.

Talent News

New staff



Lucy Mildred Odhiambo – Training Administrator

Mildred joined AERC as a Training Administrator. She has over 10 years experience in office and project management, travel and meetings logistics, reports and documents preparation, budget management and key accounting reconciliation, advocacy and community outreach.

Design and Layout:

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