

ISSUE 08 • May 2024

# AERC INSIGHT

The African Economic Research Consortium



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# Note From the Executive Director

Dear Readers,

**G**ender mainstreaming is at the heart of the African Economic Research Consortium's (AERC) activities. Despite progress made in recent years, gender inequalities persist in various domains within the consortium. Gender mainstreaming at AERC begins by acknowledging that women encounter barriers when pursuing and maintaining careers in economics. These obstacles can manifest as conflicts between domestic duties, professional aspirations, and financial constraints.

**In this newsletter, we endeavour to define some of the metrics against which to gauge whether some of our policies are meeting gender equality objectives. The stories published here will enable us to identify and suggest ways to design gender-responsive measures for inclusion in future programmes.**



At AERC, we are dedicated to providing equal opportunities for women to prevent them from being disproportionately affected compared to men. There is a growing willingness within the organisation to “mainstream” concerns about academic gendered impacts in our research and training programmes, as evidenced notably by the adoption of policies that are geared towards women’s empowerment.

Gender is the main theme of this newsletter and gender mainstreaming is clearly essential for securing social justice for women. As these efforts to mainstream gender get traction at AERC, it is important to assess ways that existing provisions on gender help or hinder the achievement of gender equality. In this newsletter, we endeavour to define some of the metrics against which to gauge whether some of our policies are meeting gender equality objectives. The stories published here will enable us to identify and suggest ways to

design gender-responsive measures for inclusion in future programmes.

This issue of the AERC INSIGHT also encapsulates events, including workshops, conferences, and seminars, which provide you with a taste of AERC’s outputs. On events, we feature the AERC Biannual Research Workshop and Celebration of International Women’s Day (IWD). There is also a section on programme activities and human resource news.

I look forward to connecting with you each quarter. Please read this AERC INSIGHT and share it with your friends. I welcome any feedback, comments and questions that you may have about the information provided therein and suggestions of topics you would like to see in future newsletters.

Welcome!

*Prof. Victor Murinde*  
Executive Director, AERC

# MAINSTREAMING GENDER AT AERC



## 1 Why Gender Matters: Mainstreaming Gender at the AERC

**T**he African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2018-2028 defines gender as “the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context and time-specific and changeable.

Gender is, therefore, a key element within Africa's social, political, and economic life, as it impacts how men and women, young men and women interact, make decisions, and access and own economic resources. Since economics involves pricing, income distribution, buyer, and household decision-making, including influencing social norms and individual economic choices<sup>1</sup>, gender impacts all these elements of economics.

Gender is socially constructed and influences the social and cultural norms of different societies. As such, gender plays an important role in economic research and development. Gender mainstreaming is a process, not an event, for attaining gender equity within an organisation. This process involves paying attention to inadequacies and gender issues at all levels of the organisation.

Gender mainstreaming at AERC starts with the recognition that women face

<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2012) Gender and economic policy management initiative – Asia and the Pacific: Gender and economics.



## Why Gender Matters: Mainstreaming Gender at the AERC

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### Mainstreaming gender.

barriers when accessing and retaining careers in economics and finance. Such barriers may entail tensions stemming from domestic responsibilities, career ambitions, and lack of financial capability, including inadequate mentoring. Ensuring women's active participation in economics is important as it will guarantee that economic policies and programmes cater to both men and women in society, not to mention promoting gender equity.

Given this background, AERC has tackled these gender issues in various ways. First, through a gender taskforce to ensure that gender issues are identified and addressed. So far, gender training has been undertaken, and a gender audit and survey are currently in the pipeline. The research department has conducted training targeting women researchers across Africa.

AERC has hired a gender specialist (Dr Lanoi Maloiy) and a food and nutrition expert (Dr Maureen Cheserek). Their main responsibility is to engender and mainstream food and nutrition in the Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets (PASHFRAM) project.

This newsletter also features women economics researchers and trainers who discuss some of the

pitfalls and opportunities they face as women in the field, including how they navigated the same. The issue concludes with a focus on gender mainstreaming in future programmes. The focus will be to ensure AERC research, training and policy engagement adequately harness opportunities in all social aspects in order to promote and protect women's rights, strengthen institutional capabilities and accountability, and give women and girls an influential voice in all spheres of life. This will enable AERC to contribute to realising Aspiration 6 of the AU Agenda 2063, namely, to foster an "Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."



**Gender mainstreaming at AERC starts with the recognition that women face barriers when accessing and retaining careers in economics and finance. Such barriers may entail tensions stemming from domestic responsibilities, career ambitions, and lack of financial capability, including inadequate mentoring.**

# Gender Mainstreaming Agenda at AERC

## 2 Gender Mainstreaming Agenda at AERC

Since its inception more than three decades ago, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has made significant contributions to economic policy research and capacity building in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

The research programme, for instance, has increased the capacity for policy-oriented economic research across SSA by mentoring over 4,500 (33% of whom are women) African researchers from 41 African countries through the thematic research programme. While the training programme has produced over 4,000 (36% of whom are women) master's and 400 (24% of whom are women) PhD alumni, many of whom are researchers, policy analysts, policymakers and thought leaders in universities, government institutions, national think-tanks, and policy research institutes.

While AERC's immense contribution to economic policy research and capacity building is not in question, gender equality remains a challenge across its programmes and partnering universities. Thus, an in-depth gender analysis and gender audit of the AERC as an organisation and of its core activities was conducted two years ago. A report of the audit was produced, and an action plan for gender mainstreaming was developed. The AERC has since established

**The AERC has since established a Gender Working Group comprising nine members from all the units within the AERC. The main mandate of the Gender Working Group is to champion gender mainstreaming within the institution and in activities undertaken with various stakeholders.**



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The audit team reviewed the status of gender mainstreaming at AERC and identified some of the priority areas in the coming years. They include the following:

- Conduct a survey study on women economics in Africa
- A Gender review of key policies and guidelines of the AERC
- Integration of gender studies in training programmes
- Master's and PhD Scholarships targeting women

# 3 Vital Statistics on Gender at AERC

The CMAP-CPP Academic Advisory Board membership by gender

	CMAP-CPP Academic Board Membership				CMAAE Academic Board Membership			
	Total	Male	Female	%(Female)	Total	Male	Female	%(Female)
<b>2016</b>	30	26	4	13	17	14	3	18
<b>2017</b>	30	27	3	10	17	14	3	18
<b>2018</b>	30	27	3	10	17	14	3	18
<b>2019</b>	30	23	6	20	17	15	2	13
<b>2020</b>	30	23	7	23	17	14	3	18
<b>2021</b>	30	23	7	23	17	14	3	18
<b>2022</b>	30	25	5	16	17	15	2	13
<b>2023</b>	30	26	4	13	17	15	2	13

The list of women who have served as members of the Academic Advisory Board due to their positions as heads of Department of Economics/Agricultural Economics at their respective CMAP, CMAAE and CPP universities is provided below.

Collaborative Ph.D. Programme (CPP) student enrolment by gender (2002 – 2020)

Gender	Annual enrolment													Total
	Class of 2002-2008	Class of 2009	Class of 2010	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019	Class of 2020	
Male	114	23	20	29	13	16	11	13	13	17	9	30	33	341
Female	29	8	12	17	4	10	8	5	10	9	4	2	15	133
<b>Total</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>474</b>



## Vital Statistics on Gender at AERC

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### Collaborative Master's Programme (CMAP) Joint Facility for Electives distribution of students by gender and university (2015-2023)

University	Gender		Total		Female %						
	Female	Male	2023	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Addis Ababa	-	-	-	-		11.1	-	-	-	-	-
Botswana	3	4	7	42.9	63.2	46.2	66.7	55.6	33.3	66.7	77.8
Cape Coast	4	21	25	16	10.5	8.3	31.3	23.1	41.7	10	8.3
Makerere	4	3	7	57.1	40	40	55.6	25	25	50	10
Malawi	3	9	12	25	45.5	30	30	0	60	58.3	41.7
Mauritius	0	0	-	-	-	55.6	-	-	85.7	61.5	80
Namibia	4	7	11	36.4	25	46.2	55.6	40	80	50	40
Zimbabwe	2	3	5	40	75	40	20	30	25	20	20
Kwame Nkrumah	1	8	9	11.1	-	22.2	23.1	-	-		
Lesotho	11	7	18	61.1	42.1	45.5	52.4	-	-		
Zambia	9	6	15	60	25	31.3	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>38.4</b>

### Collaborative Master's Programme in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) Shares Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) distribution of students by gender and university (2017-2023)

University	Gender		Total	Female %						
	Female	Male	2023	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Egerton	6	4	10	60.0	40.0	77.8	62.5	58.33	45.45	63.64
Haramaya	2	7	9	22.2	14.3	14.3	20.0	18.18	22.22	57.14
LUANAR	14	22	36	38.9	26.1	28.6	57.9	41.67	36.36	-
Makerere	6	9	15	40.0	27.8	9.1	23.5	-	-	75.00
Nairobi	5	7	12	41.7	57.1	44.4	55.2	30.43	56.25	50.00
Pretoria	10	14	20	41.7	83.3	30.0	35.7	20.00	20.00	20.00
Sokoine	6	8	14	42.9	42.9	39.1	71.4	58.33	38.89	36.36
Zimbabwe	7	4	11	63.6	55.6	27.3	15.4	33.33	50.00	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>33.7</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39.43</b>

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## Vital Statistics on Gender at AERC

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An upward trend of female enrolment into the CMAP and CPP JFE has been recorded over the years following the application of affirmative action by the AERC in the award of scholarships to qualified female students and the application of female/family-friendly policies in these programmes. This includes the provision of family support to pregnant and nursing students at both the JFE and their home institutions.

### Thematic Researchers - Biannual Research Workshop: Gender Distribution 2011-2023

Period/ Years	June				December			
	Male	Female	Total	% Female	Male	Female	Total	% Female
2011	89	20	109	<b>18</b>	78	13	91	<b>14</b>
2012	84	26	110	<b>24</b>	77	23	100	<b>23</b>
2013	88	29	117	<b>25</b>	77	27	104	<b>26</b>
2014					79	13	92	<b>14</b>
2015	83	27	110	<b>25</b>	78	20	98	<b>20</b>
2016	71	22	93	<b>24</b>	54	21	75	<b>28</b>
2017	82	19	101	<b>19</b>	81	24	105	<b>23</b>
2018	64	30	94	<b>32</b>	88	31	119	<b>26</b>
2019	88	21	109	<b>19</b>	71	30	101	<b>30</b>
2020	88	21	109	<b>19</b>	62	34	96	<b>35</b>
2021	70	20	90	<b>22</b>	90	20	110	<b>18</b>
2022	84	26	110	<b>24</b>	64	47	111	<b>42</b>
2023	62	42	104	<b>40</b>				





# 4 The Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets (PASHFARM) Project

In 2022, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation signed a grant agreement with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) to implement the 3.5-year PASHFARM project that runs until December 2025. This project borrowed lessons learnt from the previous experience of implementing its precursor project, the Agricultural Policy Analysis for Nutrition Outcomes (AFPON), between 2016 and 2022.

The experiences showed that nutrition research and nutrition outcomes were complex and required multidisciplinary teams encompassing agricultural experts, policy, health, food security, food science, and nutrition specialists, among others. In the AEPON project, there were several situations where economists used proxy nutrition outcome indicators which were inappropriate for the evaluation of different policies.

In economics quantitative research, it is a common practice to include a gender variable (often a dummy variable indicating the sex of the respondent, either male or female) in regression equations and conclude that the research was about gender – far from this. While male or female participation in development programmes is important, it is imperative to go beyond sex disaggregation and analysis and unearth deep knowledge on how and why various gender groups fit and participate in development projects.

Consequently, the PASHFARM project is managed by a multidisciplinary team of

**In the AEPON project, there were several situations where economists used proxy nutrition outcome indicators which were inappropriate for the evaluation of different policies.**

economists and gender and nutrition specialists based at the AERC. Likewise, the 20 research teams spread over 18 African countries are multidisciplinary with economists, agricultural economists, development economists, and gender and nutrition professionals. Of the 20 project teams, five are dedicated to gender research, while the rest have been substantially engendered to have a deeper analysis of gender issues. Two of the research teams are French speaking.



PASHFARM researchers



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### Spread of the PASHFARM Research Projects by Category and Gender

No.	Category	English	French	Gender-Specific	Total
1	Collaborative Framework papers	3	1	2	6
2	Faculty Research	4	0	3	7
3	Country Case Studies	6	1	0	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>

### Spread of the PASHFARM Research Projects by Country and Category

No.	Country	Research Category		
		Collaborative	Faculty	Country Case Study
1	Benin	1		
2	Cameroun	1		
3	Cameroon, Senegal & Togo	1		
4	Ethiopia			1
5	Ghana			1
6	Kenya & Malawi			1
7	Kenya		1	1
8	Kenya, Malawi & Uganda		1	
9	Malawi	1		1
10	Nigeria		1	
11	Rwanda	1		
12	Senegal			1
13	South Africa		1	
14	Tanzania	1	1	
15	Uganda		1	
16	Zambia			1
17	Zimbabwe		1	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

The project was launched in June 2023 at the Agriculture, Nutrition and Health Conference in Lilongwe, Malawi.



THE SHE FEATURE

# 5 Prof Beatrice Mkenda

## University of Dar es Salaam, Department of Economics

**A. What unique elements do women bring to the Academic Board? (Are there differences with male-dominant boards?)**

It goes without saying that men and women have some differences in their sensibilities. As a result, the differences influence how they function, their viewpoints, and how they carry out their tasks as Academic Board members or on any board, whether in the corporate world or public sector. Women, in general, are more sympathetic and accommodating of other points of view; thus, they contribute to a more balanced debate of issues. With a male-dominated board, it would exclude women's viewpoints. One-sided boards can also prevent a diversity of viewpoints and inclusiveness in decision-making.

**B. What are the challenges and opportunities you faced as a female researcher or trainer? How did you navigate these challenges?**



The most difficult challenge I faced, which I believe is shared by most female academics, was balancing academic work with family responsibilities. This made me feel very guilty when I devoted the majority of my time to academic work. At the same time, when I faced a tilt in the balance by devoting more time to my family, it brought another issue: the perception that I was falling behind or that I was not good enough for not devoting enough time to research and teaching.

During my early career, I had to turn down opportunities for research and training/studies that required me to be away from home for extended periods due to having young children.

I navigated these problems by making full use of the flexibility that academics offer. For example, on days when I didn't have

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lectures, I worked from home and focused on my responsibilities as a mother. This allowed me to spend more time with my girls and participate in various activities, including homework, school concerts, and sports days.

Another important factor that helped me was having a good support system from my family and friends. This was helpful when I had to travel. For example, when I had to travel and leave my mother or one of my in-laws to care for my daughters, my mind was at ease. In such instances, having family members who understand what it takes to be in academia is beneficial. It helps to calm the mind if, for example, one is working late or locked up in the study room when you are supposed to be entertaining visitors or participating in family gatherings. Regarding having a support system, I am grateful and blessed to have my husband, Adolf, who often proofreads my work and pushes me with his critical reviews of my publications. He would also pamper the girls while I was locked away preparing lectures or writing papers.



**Prof. Beatrice Mkenda**

### **C. What can AERC do to enable or facilitate more women trainers and researchers in Economics**

The AERC could consider allowing women to teach specific topics on course outlines instead of a full semester, as being away from family for six weeks can be challenging (for physical JFE). It's important to consider the reality of women academicians as carers and mothers. Over time, this approach may allow women trainers to gradually transition into teaching a full semester while maintaining family responsibilities.

### **D. What should be the priorities in engendering AERC training programmes?**

The AERC has implemented initiatives to assist women in enrolling in postgraduate studies. For example, the AERC already does a lot of affirmative action, such as awarding more scholarships to women. As a result, for the first time, there was parity in CPP participation! I applaud these efforts. However, more can be done to disseminate information about AERC's gender-friendly initiatives. The AERC should target undergraduate students so that while they work towards completing their bachelor's degree, they are fully aware of the opportunities available to them and may plan appropriately. Participating universities should be given information that they can share with first-year students during orientation.

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# International Women's Day

## Celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) at AERC



AERC staff members during the IWD celebrations

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) held an International Women's Day (IWD) breakfast with AERC staff, researchers, students and women from network. The event took place in a Nairobi hotel on March 8, 2024. The objective of this event was to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The event brought together 28 participants.

The main objective of gathering together was to provide inspiration, prompting reflection and underscoring the vital importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. The guest speaker was Mrs Sarah Richson, Chief Executive Officer, Richemele International Consultants. She gave an insightful talk on the theme, "Developing Women's Leadership and Harnessing Full Potential in Male-Dominated Environments".

The session provided insights for effective mainstreaming of gender in AERC, by:

- Enabling women to be each others' keepers, by

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# International Women's Day

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being defenders of women in instances of oppression, including being protectors and holding each other accountable. Such an approach will inspire adequate inclusion of gender;

- adopting a positive mindset by among others, stopping the savior mentality, stopping the victim mentality, stopping the SMEs (small and medium excuses) vs promoting SMOs (Small and Medium Opportunities), and adopting HOPE as a woman's last friend and continuously fighting until the last breath;
- building a personal brand by creating a personal brand

by among others, working out personal brand colors, upgrading skills, knowledge, qualifications experience, network, and focusing on competitive advantage based on global standards;

- and prioritizing success factors for building careers and trajecting speed on vision and legacy, voice and character, value proposition, and visuals and visibility-Optics matter whether people tell us or do not tell us.

Over all women need to maintain their feminine aura and presence while occupying leadership positions. This is because women can be feminine and lead. Through this, people can experience and accept what women in leadership feels or looks like. Doing this needs character, building substance, style, and strategy. 'Do it like only a woman can'.

International Women's Day gives focus to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence as well as abuse against women. It is a holiday celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement.

**The main objective of gathering together was to provide inspiration, prompting reflection and underscoring the vital importance of gender equality and women's empowerment."**



Celebrating International Women's Day

## The Future in Alumni Collaboration



The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has a vast network of alumni who have been through its training programmes and have contributed significantly to economic research, policy formulation, and development across the African continent. The alumni network includes many scholars, policymakers, and professionals who have benefited from AERC's training programs since its establishment in 1988 and have gone on to make significant contributions to Africa's economic development.

Through technology, the world continues to transform into a global, virtually interconnected community. The dawn of the Internet, social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and advanced communication technologies have transcended geographical barriers, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds and distant corners of the globe to connect, communicate, and collaborate in real time.

AERC has been developing a collaborative and mentoring alumni platform that seeks to promote engagement and reach within its vast AERC alumni network. This tool aims to create lasting impacts and foster a sense of belonging among our alumni, serving as dynamic hubs, connecting past members, fostering collaboration, and nurturing ongoing engagement.

The deployment of the alumni platform aligns with AERC's digital strategy for the period 2020-2025, focusing on transforming the organization's available technologies to develop, maintain, and improve visibility and stakeholder engagement.

Having a wide range of alumni has meant maintaining a large database that exists in a hybrid environment. This has presented AERC with challenges in personnel management, mentorship, and regular updates of its vast and ever-growing network.

AERC has produced a diverse cadre of alumni who are making significant contributions to global development. From government ministries to prestigious universities, AERC alumni are at the forefront of driving positive change across

borders and continents. To capture the impact of these networks the platform provides a chance for young economic researchers to collaborate and be mentored by the more experienced network that will be within the platform.

The primary objectives of this platform present a great

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opportunity to improve the visibility of the impacts of the AERC alumni network on the African continent and how they have and continue to influence policy formulation and capacity building. The tool promotes opportunities for AERC's alumni to share their experiences with the consortium, contribute content, and collaborate on projects with their peers and upcoming researchers on African economies.

Through its intuitive features and user-friendly interfaces, users within the platform can easily create their profiles, reconnect with their peers, seek mentorship and be mentors, create groups for collaborations, expand their professional networks, share jobs, and create their own organisations. The intuitive features enable the creation of an engaged online community; AERC members do not have to wait for workshops, plenaries, or biannual events to engage. Through the alumni platform, they can regularly connect and create groups that foster communication, instant



**AERC has been developing a collaborative and mentoring alumni platform that seeks to promote engagement and reach within its vast AERC alumni network.**

feedback, and engagement throughout.

The alumni platform will also serve as a centralised communication tool for the AERC's online community. AERC members scattered across the globe can stay connected with just a few clicks at any time. Whether they're in Yaoundé, Accra, Nairobi, New York, or Cape Town, the platform will serve as a virtual meeting place where alumni can exchange ideas, share updates, and engage in meaningful discussions on topics ranging from economic policy to sustainable development.

The tool represents a great mix of merits that will enrich both our experienced

and new resource personnel. It combines various features, like social media and mentorship plugins that will generate traffic and visibility and promote conversations. These interactive features make the platform powerful as they offer unparalleled opportunities for growth, learning, and collaboration.

This platform will continue to serve as a beacon of collaboration and progress, seamlessly blending social interaction with professional lives, bringing together an approach of capacity building, stakeholder engagement, service and operations transformation as championed by AERC. As the alumni come together to share, learn, and collaborate, they will not only enrich their own professional lives and careers but also contribute to the broader mission of advancing economic research, policy, and development in Africa and beyond. As the impact of AERC alumni reverberates far and wide, the organisation will continue to empower scholars and researchers across the African continent.



# Nouhan Traore: My Story with AERC as a CMAP Alumni from the University of Ghana



**Nouhan Traore from Faculty of Economics and Management at the Général Lansana Conté of Sanfonia, Conakry**

### My name and my work

I am Nouhan Traore, from the Republic of Guinea. I completed my CMAP/MPhil in Economics at the University of Ghana in 2023. The AERC awarded me this master's scholarship as part of the CMAP. Currently, I am serving as a teaching and research assistant at the Faculty of Economics and Management at the Général Lansana Conté University of Sonfonia, Conakry (UGLC-S/C).

### How did you learn about the African Economics Research Consortium and the Collaborative Masters Programme?

It all started with a vision, desire, and goal to enrol on a master's programme at an English-speaking university to pursue my PhD in economics at one of the top-ranked universities in the world. Hence, I subscribed to many scholarship information sites because I did not have any means to finance my master's programme. I believed it was possible and that, sooner or later, I would make it. The first actions I took towards my goal were translating all my academic documents into English and learning English to improve my listening and speaking skills using social media, YouTube, and Massive

**I can confirm without hesitation that the success of the Bridge Master's programme was the cornerstone of my collaborative Master's programme (Master of Philosophy in Economics) at the University of Ghana from 2022 to 2023.**

Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

My journey with the AERC training programme began in 2018 when, two days before its deadline, I came across the call for applications for the Master's Bridge programme. Gathering all the required documents, I submitted my application on

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the eve of the deadline. A few weeks later, as a citizen of a fragile and underrepresented country, I received an email informing me of my admission into the programme. I was invited to participate in a six-week intensive teaching programme (May to June 2018) covering core fields of economics (microeconomics, macroeconomics, and quantitative methods) at the University of Burundi. Following this, I joined other Bridge program students from the National University of Lesotho and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique for a two-week networking session, joint revisions, and final examinations (in July 2018) at the AERC's Joint Facility for Electives (JFE) at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi, Kenya. The eight weeks of intensive learning covered intermediate macroeconomics and microeconomics, as well as the basics and advanced topics in mathematics, statistics, and econometrics, including the application of software such as Stata. These are fundamental for enrollment in a graduate programme.

At the end of the Bridge programme, I honestly felt confident and ready to successfully undertake postgraduate study and complete it in due time. Moreover, the gathering of all Bridge programme students at the JFE in Nairobi enabled me to enrich my social and cultural capital and to create a new academic and research family across Africa.

I can confirm without hesitation that the success of the Bridge Master's programme was the cornerstone of my collaborative Master's programme (Master of Philosophy in Economics) at the University of Ghana from 2022 to 2023.

### How did you get to be part of the Collaborative Master Programme?

During the networking event in Nairobi in 2018, the AERC training programme's team shared information with us about the process of applying to CMAP. At that time, most of AERC's partner universities had closed their application portals for the Master's programme.



**AERC library**

In 2019, I applied for admission to the School of Economics at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Unfortunately, I received my admission letter two weeks after the deadline for the AERC CMAP scholarship application. Nevertheless, I still submitted my application to AERC for the CMAP scholarship. Regrettably, my application was too late, as AERC had already awarded all the CMAP scholarships. The programme manager advised me to request the University of Dar es Salaam to defer my admission to 2020. However, the global outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) disrupted the world, and there was no call for CMAP scholarships.

In 2021, the AERC launched the call for CMAP scholarship applications,

**My journey with the AERC training programme began in 2018 when, two days before its deadline, I came across the call for applications for the Master's Bridge programme. Gathering all the required documents, I submitted my application on the eve of the deadline.**

prioritising the Bridge Students cohort of 2018. I seized that opportunity and applied for admission to Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ethiopia. Fortunately, I was granted admission to the Master of Philosophy in Economics at the College of Business and Economics at AAU and awarded the CMAP scholarship. I began my studies in October 2021. However, while I was in the process of registering at the University, the political and security situation deteriorated due to the war of separation in Tigray. As a precautionary measure, the AERC evacuated me from Ethiopia and sent me back to my country. I left Addis Ababa on November 11, 2021, thinking that my dream was shattered. Fortunately, the University of Ghana, a partner university of the AERC, had delayed its academic year due to lecturer strikes. The AERC engaged with the Economics Department of the University of Ghana to transfer my admission and CMAP scholarship to their institution. Upon approval by the University of Ghana, my CMAP scholarship was transferred, and I was admitted to the Master of Philosophy in Economics. I reported to the University on January 21, 2022.

Once again, I'd like to thank the AERC

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# Alumni Focus

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**Thanks to the Master's Bridge programme, I was technically well-prepared for the MPhil in economics programme. However, one of the challenges I faced during the first few months was my lack of fluency in communicating in English, as the language of instruction was English.**

and its staff for their invaluable endeavours throughout this transfer from Addis Ababa University to the University of Ghana.

### **Tell us about your Collaborative Master Programme (CMAP/MPhil in Economics) experience at the University of Ghana, Legon.**

The experiences I've had during these two years of study have been both challenging and enjoyable. Thanks to the Master's Bridge programme, I was technically well-prepared for the MPhil in economics programme. However, one of the challenges I faced during the first few months was my lack of fluency

in communicating in English, as the language of instruction was English. This limitation initially hindered my ability to participate fully in class discussions and debates.

Being aware of this limitation and committed to overcoming it, I developed a personal plan. I started reading novels and books and took some advanced English classes online in addition to my MPhil classes. These efforts significantly improved my communication, listening, and writing skills.

The University of Ghana's CMAP/MPhil in economics maintained academic rigour. The first year was devoted to intensive coursework, which was highly demanding of time, energy, and good organisation to successfully pass all the exams. Despite the challenges, this turned out to be an enjoyable academic journey. I personally gained a lot of experience in academia, policy analysis, and making good use of my time, which would not only positively impact my PhD studies and my career as a lecturer but also as a researcher in Economics and related fields.

The core courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and quantitative

techniques, along with my electives in monetary economics and international economics, delved deeper into state-of-the-art economics and policy analysis. These courses equipped me with the skills to carry out independent research and analysis of real-world problems. In addition, the CMAP/MPhil in Economics provided me with a strong theoretical foundation and quantitative analysis, which prepared me to successfully undertake a PhD programme in economics.

The second year was dedicated to research, which was basically the application of the coursework programme I undertook in the first year and about developing and strengthening the student's research and analysis competencies. Given my interest in international economics, with some overlap in monetary economics and macroeconomics, I chose to write my thesis on the nexus between economic transformation, international trade, and financial development in Africa. The choice of this topic was motivated by the ongoing debate on the role of international trade and financial development in transforming developing countries' economies, especially in Africa.

In this research, I tried to answer the following questions: What is the causal link between structural transformation, export value-added total, and financial development? What are the reciprocal influences of sectoral value addition, export value-added total, and financial development? Applying the system Generalized Method of Moments estimator to dynamic Panel Vector Autoregression (PVAR) models, I arrived at the main conclusion of the weak interaction between structural transformation, export value-added total, value addition and financial development index, highlighting the lack of coherence and coordination in development policies in Africa despite a multitude of efforts at industrialisation, trade liberalisation, and financial development policies and initiatives.

The research and thesis were



University of Ghana

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instrumental in my intellectual development in several domains. First, they disciplined me in my use of time and work organisation. Second, throughout the dissertation process, I developed skills and strategies to overcome numerous challenges encountered in all aspects of thesis writing. Lastly, I significantly enhanced my data analysis competencies using various econometrics software.

With my firm commitment, I successfully passed all exams and was among the first four students in the cohort to submit and defend their theses within the programme's timeframe.

**What would you advise the aspiring CMAP scholarship students from other underrepresented countries?**

First, to all aspiring economists and researchers from Africa, the AERC is an indispensable walk-through in the sense that it is one of the best and most highly ranked economic research institutions in Africa. In addition, AERC is a research consortium that provides the opportunity for young economists and researchers to strengthen or build their capacities in academia and policy analysis.

Regarding entry into the CMAP programme, aspiring students should familiarise themselves with the AERC and its mission. Once convinced, they should demonstrate diligence, perseverance, and courage throughout the application process. With a growing number of scholarship applicants, the selection process has become highly competitive. Therefore, applicants should commence their journey early to enhance their chances of securing both university admission and CMAP scholarships. Non-native English speakers and those from French-speaking universities should not let language barriers deter them from seizing this excellent opportunity. As an old saying in my mother tongue goes, "If you know your tears are far from your eyes, you must start weeping early." Therefore, cultivate your desire, dedicate yourself, and persist

**The AERC is an indispensable walk-through in the sense that it is one of the best and most highly ranked economic research institutions in Africa. In addition, AERC is a research consortium that provides the opportunity for young economists and researchers to strengthen or build their capacities in academia and policy analysis.**

in turning your limitations into strengths. Remember, if others have achieved it, you can too, and perhaps even surpass their success.

**What is your career goal and your goal in the coming years?**

I want to evolve in both academia and research institutions to share knowledge and conduct challenging research to inform decision-making in international organisations, government agencies, central banks, financial institutions, firms, and NGOs in the fight against poverty and inequality across Africa. To achieve this goal, I am looking for admission into a PhD programme in economics to further deepen my analytical and empirical research to analyse economic phenomena and address critical societal issues. I strongly believe that a PhD in economics would inculcate in me the required skills and knowledge that are necessary to stand out in the competitive world and achieve my goal of becoming a successful and reputed economist and researcher.



**Nouhan Traore**

## Economic Research and Policy-Making in Kenya (ERPMK)

**O**n 8th March 2024, AERC, in Collaboration with GOK- UCPH-DERG, Hosted a Stakeholder Engagement Workshop themed “**Economic Research and Policy-Making in Kenya (ERPMK)**”

Kenya has experienced relatively steady economic growth and rising per capita incomes over the past decade. However, despite becoming a lower middle-income country in 2014, poverty levels in Kenya remain high, with more than a third (34%) of the population living below the poverty line. In recent years, the economy has been hit by several large external shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic (with GDP contraction in 2020, especially due to lockdowns); droughts, which have increased in frequency and severity due to climate change; and the Russia-Ukraine war that led to fuel and food shortages thereby exacerbating post-pandemic inflation (from 6.1 % in 2021 to 7.7% in 2022) as well as raising the borrowing costs and interest rates. The recent economic shocks have led to narrowed fiscal spaces resulting from shock response spending, continued public investments, and bulging recurrent spending, leading to high debt levels

that require proper management for the attainment of inclusive growth and development goals.

The government is following the – Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) – as the economic management model to push economic recovery and address the longstanding socio-economic inequities. The approach focuses on those at the bottom of the pyramid to empower them financially and promote investments, thereby

**Appropriate policy responses are required to handle the economic pressures in the short term (such as high inflation and high debt servicing costs) and simultaneously address the medium- to longer-term challenges of persistent poverty and rising income inequality.**



**Prof Finn Tarp, University of Copenhagen**

reducing inequality, poverty, and unemployment and enabling the poor to contribute to economic development. The successful implementation of BETA requires a significant flow of resources to support key initiatives in housing, agriculture, MSMEs, digital superhighways and health care.

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**1 AERC-UCPH-DERG Research on Economic Research and Policy-Making in Kenya (ERPMK):** The objective of the collaboration is to generate high-quality research, which can provide policy advice to decision makers in Kenya. Research activities will focus on several key areas of concern to the Government of Kenya - which include domestic resource mobilisation (including specific issues of both tax policy and tax administration); the informal sector and employment generation (rigorous economic impact analysis); Kenya's opportunities in global green value chains; and trade and industrial policy (how to pursue economic transformation). The findings will help serve as a basis and input to policy reforms in the National Treasury, thereby enhancing the evidence base for informed economic policy-making in Kenya.

**2 The stakeholders engagement workshop:** The stakeholders workshop focuses on the tax related studies under the ERPMK programme that aim at bringing about reforms in the tax policy and the tax instruments with a view to generate additional revenue in an equitable and cost-effective way. The workshop was meant to get more input on the studies underway from the relevant key stakeholders. Based on the studies, the workshop provided the stakeholders with a platform to discuss key policy areas to assist the Government of Kenya in its pursuit of necessary economic reforms

**3 Expected outcomes:**

- i.) Tangible set of tax prepositions that can be applied and implemented in the Finance Bill.
- ii.) Ensure policy reforms are practical and revenue enhancing.
- iii.) Clarify the reforms to be undertaken to redesign Kenya's tax system.

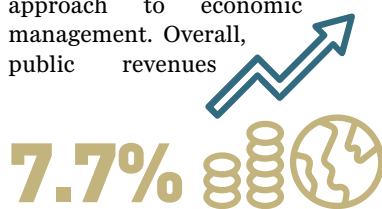


**Prof Njuguna Ndung'u, CS Treasury, Kenya.**

In this regard, the Government of Kenya has prioritised the need to enhance domestic resources in the face of high debt levels and narrow fiscal space to finance its development agenda. Innovative domestic resource mobilisation is crucial for fostering inclusive growth. A successful fiscal policy plays a pivotal role in creating fiscal space that can be directed toward debt resolution, capital accumulation, and social protection programmes. Therefore, research that generates evidence-based economic policies is crucial for informing government policies that align with the BETA approach to economic management. Overall, public revenues

remain low in Kenya in both absolute and relative terms. Ordinary revenue collection as share of GDP declined to 14.1 percent of GDP in the FY 2022/23 from 18.1 percent of GDP in the FY 2013/14. Faced with the current fiscal pressures, the GoK has announced measures to help close the fiscal gap, while protecting the vulnerable. At the same time, the GoK intends to meet all debt obligations. Reducing expenditures and enhancing revenues to contain the fiscal deficit will necessarily include both short-term measures to be implemented (almost) immediately and medium-term reforms, which will be realised over several years.

To support both immediate policy needs and long-term reforms, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), in partnership with key Kenyan institutions such as the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPR) and the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), with support from the Royal Danish Embassy in Nairobi and the Development Economics Research Group at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH-DERG), is undertaking a collaborative research project. The goal is to provide quality evidence



**the recent inflation amid significant external shocks. These include the COVID-19 pandemic, droughts exacerbated by climate change, and the Russia-Ukraine war. These factors led to a rise in inflation from 6.1% in 2021 to 7.7% in 2022, impacting borrowing costs and interest rates due to fuel and food shortages.**

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**Prof Finn Tarp addressing participants at the stakeholders engagement workshop on tax.**

from up-to-date research on selected economic issues, aiding “home-grown” Economic Research and Policy-Making in Kenya (ERPMK).

### The agenda:

The past few years have witnessed several large shocks to the international economy, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the most severe drought in East Africa in more than 40 years. As most other countries, Kenya struggles to absorb the impact of these shocks, notably the supply constraints that have raised the scarcity value leading to sharp increases in the prices of basic commodities and hence the cost of living. The economy is just starting to recover from the pandemic and other shocks. Handling the external economic pressures while protecting the most vulnerable, puts extraordinary pressure on economic policies pursued by the Government of Kenya. It is increasingly difficult to tackle the economic challenges, while dealing effectively with widespread poverty and high-income inequality. Hence, appropriate policy responses are required to handle the economic pressures in the short term (such as high inflation and high debt servicing costs) and simultaneously address the medium- to longer-term challenges of persistent poverty and rising income inequality. The bottom line is to raise revenues to finance recurrent expenditures and push

the development agenda along the lines of BETA.

With support from the Royal Danish Embassy in Nairobi, the African Economic Research Consortium in partnership with a series of Kenyan partners, supported by the

**This workshop focused on the tax related instruments and tax reform measures and how to optimize them to generate revenue in an equitable and cost-effective way.**

Development Economics Research Group at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH-DERG), is undertaking collaborative research project to support “home-grown” Economic Research and Policy-Making in Kenya (ERPMK). The objective of the research collaboration is to generate high-quality research, to enhance understanding of the tax policy in place and its impact, and to review the optimal tax measures required to support a large tax base consistent with expenditure requirements while at the same time ensure equity and market development. Thus, the research will generate evidence-based policy in relation to structure of tax policy, tax policy instruments and the ideal fiscal policy framework. This will support a re-designing of Kenya’s tax policy to ensure that tax revenue measures and compliance are consistent with BETA development goals.

This workshop therefore focused on the tax related instruments and tax reform measures and how to optimize them to generate revenue in an equitable and cost-effective way. The stakeholder’s workshop brought together key stakeholders from relevant institutions who have important roles to play in shaping new research findings, paving new policy directions, and initiating innovative practices in the focus areas.



**Researchers who presented papers at the stakeholders engagement workshop on tax issues.**

# AERC and the Afreximbank hold Partnership Meeting in Cairo



AERC and Afreximbank teams

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and the Africa Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) renewed their longstanding collaboration in a meeting that was held on February 26, 2024, in Cairo, Egypt. In this crucial meeting, the successes, challenges, and the way forward on the collaboration which began in 2020 were discussed.

Prof Dominique Njinkeu, former interim Executive Director, AERC, shared the history of AERC since its establishment in 1988. He walked the participants through the AERC governance structure constituting of the Board, Programme Committee, the Academic Advisory Boards, and the Secretariat. He then discussed the need for the new AERC to have a strong African voice in the governance structure.

“That is why for my fundraising since August 2023, I have prioritised the African Development Bank (AfDB), Afreximbank, African central bank governors, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Such a strong African voice will help, among others champion African research and policy agenda,” he said, adding that this way, AERC will be able to respond to African priorities for African transformation.

Prof Njinkeu, also elaborated on the AERC programmes, providing an overview of the Thematic and Collaborative research programmes; the Collaborative training

programmes, CMAP for Anglophone Africa, Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP) and Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) in the eastern and southern Africa regions. He noted that there were plans for AERC to increase coverage from sub-Saharan Africa to continental Africa.

Dr Christiane Abou Lehaf, Senior Manager, International Cooperation, observed that since 2020 the AERC/Afreximbank collaboration had faced challenges, a view that was held by the Afreximbank team, including Dr. Yemi Kale, the Managing Director and Group Chief Economist, and Dr Sampawende Jule Tapsoba, the Deputy Chief Economist and Director Data Management and Model Development. Therefore, there was a need to revitalize the collaboration by isolating a few, clear deliverables for implementation in 2024. This would then pave the way for further collaboration in the next five-year strategic phase of AERC

**“That is why for my fundraising since August 2023, I have prioritised the African Development Bank (AfDB), Afreximbank, African central bank governors, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Such a strong African voice will help, among others champion African research and policy agenda,”**

Prof Dominique Njinkeu

– 2025-2030. The renewed collaboration will also include regular sharing of published papers championed by the knowledge management personnel at both institutions. The bank also proposed other avenues for further collaboration including the Centre of Excellence in partnership with the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU); Cairo University; and the Center for Development, which they will be happy to link with AERC.

# AERC – IDRC Meeting in Nairobi



AERC-IDRC Meeting in Nairobi

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted a team from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) on Wednesday, 28 February 2024. Led by Ms Erin Tansey, IDRC Director for Sustainable Inclusive Economies (SIE) who was visiting Nairobi from Ottawa, Canada, the two organisations had productive dialogues. Ms Tansey was visiting the AERC to familiarise herself with the organisation and engage in discussions about future collaborations.

Prof Dominique Njinkeu, former interim Executive Director, AERC, in his remarks commended the visit, observing that the IDRC has been AERC’s partner since its inception. While expressing gratitude to the team for being part of this productive meeting, Prof. Njinkeu, underscored the fact that AERC has created a robust enabling environment for high-quality economic policy research in Africa by facilitating a coordinated policy response, interventions for communicating and disseminating evidence-based economic policy research across the continent.

“AERC has built a critical mass of economists in sub-Saharan Africa by broadening access, safeguarding quality, and ensuring sustainability of collaborative graduate training and we are now gearing for a transition to a renewed and stronger AERC to improve the quality of research and efficiency,” he said.

Ms Erin Tansey noted that just

**AERC has built a critical mass of economists in sub-Saharan Africa by broadening access, safeguarding quality, and ensuring sustainability of collaborative graduate training and we are now gearing for a transition to a renewed and stronger AERC to improve the quality of research and efficiency.”** Prof Dominique Njinkeu

like AERC, IDRC has been enhancing its investment in knowledge translation and dissemination of research to move evidence into action so as to address development challenges. “We are pursuing a more systematic focus on sharing of knowledge between partners,” she added.

It is worth noting that IDRC has been supporting programmes focussed on inclusive growth for decades. The goal is to support rigorous and policy-oriented research that generates new insights and options for promoting policies that facilitate inclusive growth. Their collaborations with researchers, policymakers, and international development practitioners have tremendously helped to foster leading thinkers with well-informed views. This is because their diverse insights and opinions represent their commitment to advancing knowledge and using rigorous research to find sustainable solutions to international development challenges.

One important issue that came up in the meeting is a proposal on Greening Financial Inclusion (GFI) for sustainable development in Africa. AERC observed that this would bring the two strands of environmental sustainability and access to financial services together. The whole concept involves extending financial services to underserved populations with the aim of promoting environmental stewardship and supports the transition to a green economy. To note is that GFI helps to develop climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation to the effects of Climate Change (CC).

# AERC signs a Cooperation MoU with UNDP in New York (USA)

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to cooperate in area of mutual concern related to development. This event took place in New York, United States of America on February 8, 2024.



AERC MoU with UNDP

“The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to provide a framework for the non-exclusive cooperation and facilitate and strengthen collaboration between AERC and UNDP in various areas of cooperation,” said Prof Dominique Njinkeu.

The two organizations have identified several activities in which cooperation may be pursued, with each organization operating subject to its respective mandates, governing regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.

The areas of mutual interest include development of a network of seasoned economists to conduct research in areas of shared focus across cross-cutting themes including but not limited to issues surrounding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and development economics.

AERC and UNDP will also develop a

multilayer research plan aligned with African priorities to orient research activities around it. The UNDP will explore possibilities to include AERC in the African Economic Conference partnership with African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

This partnership will as well make it possible to explore possible joint research initiatives at regional and UNDP Country Office level, leveraging on the respective organization comparative advantages and presence. This will facilitate the exchange of data, research, information, analysis, and reports relating to activities of the two organizations and leverage networks as well as expertise in the interest of the organizations.

The MoU will support thought leadership

**“The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to provide a framework for the non-exclusive cooperation and facilitate and strengthen collaboration between AERC and UNDP in various areas of cooperation,” Prof. Dominique Njinkeu**

and impactful innovative development solutions based on analysis, research and evidence and its operationalization shall be guided by an annual Joint Action Plan (JAP) agreed between the two organizations. The two parties will at such intervals as deemed appropriate, convene meetings to review the progress of activities being carried out under the MoU and plan for future activities.



# AERC at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Taskforce Meeting

**T**he African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) was represented at the Climate, Development, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Taskforce meetings and workshops that were hosted by Boston University in Washington D.C., from January 28-31, 2024. Dr. Abbi Kedir, Director of Research, AERC represented the organisation in this high-level policy workshop.

As the task force began the next phase of the project, these in-person meetings provided it with the opportunity to accelerate its work in pursuing a robust dialogue on how the IMF can advance climate action in a manner that best promotes low carbon, inclusive, and climate-resilient growth globally.

As an organization, AERC presented preliminary findings of a technical study on “Climate finance, fiscal balance and external debt: Evidence from Africa” which underscored the macro-critical nature of climate finance.

In addition, AERC participated in three additional events including a workshop on “Low Income Country Debt Sustainability Framework” where the following core

issues were discussed; Integrating climate change into debt sustainability analyses.

AERC also took part in a workshop on “Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST)” where several development-oriented themes were discussed including Country case study deep-dive on RSF (resilience and sustainability framework) which is ongoing in 16 countries and presentations both by the World Bank and IMF on RSF. The organization was also represented during the presentation of the key messages of the work of the taskforce to IMF and World Bank board and senior directors in the premises of the IMF.

In terms of outcome and follow up plans, the team will be working on the second assessment report of the taskforce and

strengthening strategic engagement with stakeholders including preparing short and snappy policy brief. The group will also continue working on themes such as the following: Situating the role of the IMF in terms in the context of resource mobilization to achieve development and climate change goals; the challenges posed by the existing macroeconomic environment, given debt distress, fiscal constraints and the cost of capital; the urgency of adaptation, including food security; green industrialization and the impact of industrial policies in the Global North and the role of central banks and reality check (including macro consistency) of external finance needs.



## AERC holds a Final Review Workshop for Value Chain Development and Economic Transformation in African Economies (GVC) Country Case Studies

**A**ERC is implementing a collaborative project on Value chain development and economic transformation in African economies funded by SIDA since 2021.

The premise of the project is based on the argument that while sustained growth has contributed significantly to rapid economic transformation in Asia and Latin America, in Africa it has been observed that relatively high growth rates have contributed very

little to job creation and in lifting the largest segment of the population out of poverty. Although there has been growth in exports and value over time, there has been a declining African export share in global value chains, pointing to Africa's reduced competitiveness in these sub-sectors. Despite decades of protectionism of Africa's manufacturing sector, its share of manufactured goods remains low.

The service sector continues to be promising but is faced with stiff competition from the more developed world where tourism and hospitality industry is more robust. Africa's significant agricultural and natural resources are being exploited and exported mostly in their raw form, with little or no value added to commodity exports. Some of these natural resources represent irreplaceable, non-renewable

assets, and their exploitation needs to be monitored while also recognizing that generally it has weak economic linkages to the rest of the economy. Economic diversification based on value-addition to natural and agricultural resources and export-oriented production, therefore, has a major role to play in the transformation of African economies from the current low-income to middle-income levels. Economic diversification should have a significant impact on job creation and poverty reduction. The upsurge in GVCs/RVCs as a vehicle for economic diversification and the basis for resource-based industrial development is timely, given the increased demand for Africa's natural resources, together with increased urbanization and consumer demand for processed goods within the continent.

# Off the Press New Publications

## Policy Brief: Health is Wealth: The Impact of Health Insurance on Multidimensional Poverty in Ethiopia

### Date

2024-04-11

### Author

Kaleab Haile

### Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium



### Abstract

While previous empirical studies extensively examined the determinants of households' health insurance (HI) uptake, little has been done to evaluate the accompanying impacts on household welfare and poverty incidence. This study bridges the existing gap in the literature by examining the impact of HI on multidimensional household poverty. The data comes from the latest wave of the Ethiopia Socio-economic Survey (ESS) collected in 2018/19. The study uses propensity score matching and inverse probability weighted regression adjustment to even out the distribution of observed characteristics across purchasers and non-purchasers of HI. The results reveal that households' uptake of HI significantly reduces their probability of being multidimensionally poor. This study sheds light on the role of universal health coverage through HI as a policy instrument in the fight against multidimensional deprivations in the context of sub-Saharan Africa.

### URL

<https://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/48503048-46cc-4c65-8534-5b1c34cf49d1/content>

## Policy Brief: Aid Fragmentation and Development Outcomes in Sub-Saharan African Countries

### Date

2024-04-11

### Authors

Sessinou Dedehouanou

### Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium



### Abstract

This study examined the fragmentation of official development assistance (ODA) in sub-Saharan African countries and the role played by development outcomes. Initially, it analysed the fragmentation of aid over the period 2000 to 2019 using the Theil index. On the donor side, it appears that the fragmentation of aid from bilateral Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors and bilateral non-DAC donors has decreased significantly in recent years. In addition, the aid provided by bilateral DAC donors has been less fragmented than that given by non-DAC bilateral donors. Several traditional donors and so-called emerging donors have contributed to the fragmentation of aid in sub-Saharan African countries.

As for aid recipients, the countries of Southern Africa or those belonging to the group of so-called fragile states have suffered less from aid fragmentation than their counterparts in Central, East, and West Africa, and those belonging to the group of non-fragile states. The results obtained validated that the fragmentation of aid can be reduced by better coordination of aid at the sectoral level and, above all, by internal development factors (structural transformation policies and equity in the use of resources).

### URL

<https://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/items/b15d0df6-44af-4978-8eca-d54eb5a49bbd>

## Off the Press New Publications

### Research Paper 551: The Determinants of Protective Behaviours During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Benin

#### Date

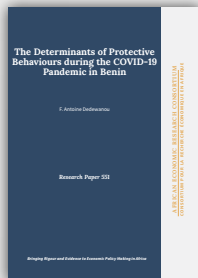
2024-04-10

#### Author

Antonie Dedewanou

#### Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium



#### Abstract

This paper investigates the determinants of protective behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic in Benin. We use data from online and phone surveys collected during the period September 13, 2020 – October 1, 2020, among Benin citizens aged 18 years and older. Trust in government, beliefs about others' compliance and employment status are significant determinants of compliance with precautionary measures such as handwashing and social distancing. We also document a significant association between trust in government and media use. These findings, therefore, suggest that the Government of Benin's messages should focus on developing and maintaining trust among the public by providing transparent, coherent, clear, timely, and accurate information that reduces people's uncertainty and enhances compliance. Two-way communication between the government and citizens can act as a bridge to ensure public engagement and disseminate information.

#### URL

<https://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/items/ba0917ba-5da4-486b-b8d6-5b955f5400ce>

### Research Paper 552: Tea Prices and Household Consumption Patterns in Tanzania

#### Date

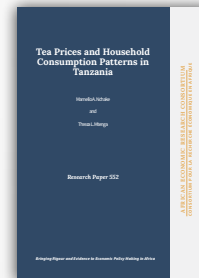
2024-04-12

#### Authors

Mamelo Nchake  
Threza Mtenga

#### Publisher

African Economic Research Consortium



#### Abstract

Tea production is a significant contributor to Tanzania's output and income. The country is a price taker in regional and international tea markets. This makes it vulnerable to price shocks, which can have a detrimental impact on smallholder farmers, especially those who heavily rely on tea production for their income. This vulnerability is particularly critical for net producers who lack alternative income sources, especially in rural areas. The study uses a panel dataset from the Tanzania National Panel Survey (TNPS), collected over the periods 2008-2009, 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. The study's main findings indicate that tea price shocks have a strong negative effect on the consumption patterns of smallholder farming households in Tanzania. The results also highlight that the impact of price shocks is not uniform across all households. It varies based on factors such as the gender of the household head and the location (rural or urban). The study underscores the importance of government intervention to support households affected by price shocks.

#### URL

<https://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/items/e2a6f172-3d0f-4fca-a767-87f219de3997>

## Off the Press New Publications

### SPS XXV Report on Proceedings: Senior Policy Seminar on Human Capital Development in Africa

#### Date

2024-04-10

#### Authors

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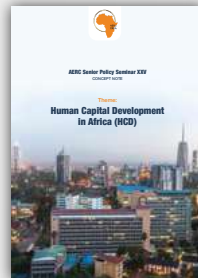
#### Abstract

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted its 25th senior policy seminar, focusing on the broad theme of Human Capital Development in Africa. The conference was held on March 29-30, 2023. Four papers were presented followed by a policy roundtable. AERC used this seminar as the primary dissemination vehicle for the outputs of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) supported AERC collaborative research project on “Human Capital Development in Africa.” The AERC – BMGF project seeks to substantially enhance the capacity of African governments to deal with development challenges confounded by an increasingly disruptive developmental challenge. Human capital is critical for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in Africa. Investment in human beings for improved social and economic outcomes in future – through education and training, learning and experience, or health interventions – is vital in shaping future income and productivity.

AERC Senior Policy Seminars are forums designed specifically to bring together senior policy makers from sub-Saharan African countries to exchange experiences and deliberate on topical issues pertaining to sustainable development of their economies. Participants in these seminars are drawn from the highest levels of government, including the presidency, ministers, governors of central banks, heads of civil services, permanent secretaries and heads of government agencies and parastatals.

#### URL

<https://aercafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/AERC-Senior-Policy-Seminar-XXV-1.pdf>



### Data Governance and Policy in Africa

#### Editors

Bitange Ndemo,  
Njuguna Ndung'u,  
Scholastica Odhiambo  
Abebe Shimeles



This book examines data governance and its implications for policymaking in Africa. Bringing together economists, lawyers, statisticians, and technology experts, it assesses gaps in both the availability and use of existing data across the continent, and argues that data creation, management and governance need to improve if private and public sectors are to reap the benefits of big data and digital technologies. It also considers lessons from across the globe to assess principles, norms and practices that can guide the development of data governance in Africa. The book will appeal to scholars and students of data governance, technology, and public policy, as well as practitioners and policy makers

#### URL

<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-24498-8>

## Deepening Collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB)

**O**n January 30, 2024, an AERC team led by Prof Dominique Njinkeu, the former interim Executive Director, met with Prof Désiré Jean-Marie Vencatachellum, the Senior Director, Country Economics Department, and the AfDB Lead Economist for East Africa, North Africa, West Africa, South Africa, Central Africa, and Nigeria Country Department. The teams discussed how the AERC and the AfDB could deepen partnership, including the following: 1) Invitation of the AfDB into the AERC Board to enable their contribution in shaping the AERC's research and development agenda; 2) How AfDB could tap into the AERC professional network, especially of women economists, for attainment of gender parity; and 3) Explore possibilities to picky back on AERC and other conferences to access ministers, central bank governors, and other government officials for the African financial stability mechanism. The consultations were followed by the development of a concept note to support AERC-AfDB activities for consideration by the AfDB management.



Prof. Dominique Njinkeu

## AERC Round Up

# Programme Accompanying Research and Agricultural Innovation (PARI) Research and Partnership Meeting



Participants in the research and agricultural innovation workshop.

**O**n February 5-6, 2024, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), in partnership with the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, hosted the PARI Research and Partnership Meeting at the Royal Fiesta Hotel, Accra, Ghana.

The opening remarks were made by a panel of four eminent leaders, Paul Bosu, Director General of CSIR Ghana, Moumini Savadogo, Managing Director, AKADEMIYA2063; Joachim von Braun, Distinguished Professor, ZEF and PARI Director; and Aggrey Agumya, Executive Director, FARA. Other notable speakers were Prof. Hamadi Iddi Boga, the Vice President, Programme Delivery at the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Seven agenda sessions were discussed viz:

1. Sharing insights from Africa and India;
2. Enhancing sustainability and climate resilience of African agriculture;
3. The Future of the Malabo Declaration beyond 2025 – What next?;
4. Empowering women and youth in African food systems;
5. Sustainably scaling Africa's livestock sector;
6. Strengthening the enabling environment for equitable food systems transformation; and
7. High-level panel: Future research priorities for Africa's food systems transformation. The manager, training, AERC, participated in the panel on empowering women and youth in African food systems.

# Thesis Dissemination Workshop

## Dar es Salaam, Tanzania



Thesis dissemination workshop participants.

**A** Thesis Dissemination workshop was held on February 12, 2024, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for eight graduates of Sokoine University of Agriculture. The workshop, whose theme was Technology Adoption for Food and Income Security in Tanzania was opened by Prof Reuben Kadigi of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Sokoine University of Agriculture, and was attended by 40 stakeholders who included smallholder farmers, Ministry of Agriculture officials and academia. The objective of the workshop was to share the results of thesis research with stakeholders. One of the presenters, Ms. Jacqueline Patrick Majuva was the first runners-up in the 2022 Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE).



Farmer training workshop participants.

# Farmer Training

## Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

A farmer training was held between February 13-15, 2024, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for 40 farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs from various regions of Tanzania including Mwanza, Morogoro, Iringa, Tanga, Arusha and Mbeya, among other regions. The training was delivered by Ms. Hadija Pheri Jabiri and assisted by Mr Emmanuel Seni and focused on concepts of farming as a business by transforming the largely subsistence agriculture to commercial agri-enterprises.

# Monitoring Visits to Sokoine University of Agriculture and University of Dar es Salaam



AERC staff in a monitoring visit

The AERC team of Dr. Tom Kimani, Lead Manager, Training; Dr Mark Korir, Manager, Training; and Ms. Evar Kiambuthi, Lead Programme Administrator, Training, made two monitoring visits, one to Sokoine University of Agriculture and the other to University of Dar es Salaam on Wednesday, February 14 and Friday, February 16, 2024, respectively.

The team met with Prof Maulid W. Mwatawala, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics the then acting Vice Chancellor, Sokoine University of Agriculture; Prof Philip Damas, the Principal, College of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness; and Dr Fulgence Mishili, the Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

At the University of Dar es Salaam, the team met Prof Beatrice Kalinda Mkenda, the Dean, School of Economics; Dr Innocent Pantaleo, the Head of Department of Economics, faculty members and graduate students of the Collaborative PhD programme in Economics (CPP).

# Thesis Dissemination Workshop for University of Nairobi Graduates

A thesis dissemination workshop was held for the University of Nairobi Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE)/ African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) graduates on March 4, 2024, at the Fairview Hotel, Nairobi. The workshop was opened by Prof. Dominique Njinkeu, former interim Executive Director, AERC, and attended by Prof. Moses Nyangito, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi.



**Ms Feukeng Tsuanyo Florette, a graduate of the University of Nairobi, with her lecturer, Dr Patrick Irungu**

The event also attracted faculty members of the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi; officers from the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), Ministry of Agriculture, International Potato Centre (CIP), the National Potato Council of Kenya, The National Treasury, Kenya, and most importantly, farmers, among other organisations.

The objective of the workshop was to share the results of the thesis research findings of the University of Nairobi CMAAE graduates. The theme was “Technology adoption for agricultural sustainability” and dwelt on various agricultural value chains, including potato, honey, grain legumes, maize, mango, and dairy enterprises. The research was done mainly in Kenya, but one among the nine research findings presented was done in Malawi, thus reinforcing the international nature of the CMAAE programme at the University of Nairobi. One CMAAE graduate, Ms. Feukeng Tsuanyo Florette, a Cameroon national, presented her research results on the Analysis of Return on Investment and Cost-Effectiveness of the International Potato Center-led Potato Seed System Interventions in Malawi. This was well received, with stakeholders requesting a similar study in Kenya.



Participants pose a group photo after the workshop in Kigali.

## The Economic Policy Research Network and the African Economic Research Consortium Digital Financial Services Studies Dissemination Workshop in Kigali, Rwanda

**T**he Economic Policy Research Network, in partnership with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), hosted a dissemination workshop at Lemigo Hotel on August 29, 2023.

The workshop was held under the theme, *Development and Social Inclusion of (Digital) Financial Services in Rwanda* and featured about 90 participants including representative of public institutions, private sector, CSOs, INGOs, financial institutions, academia and media.

The main objective of this workshop was to disseminate the key findings from four research papers developed under the AERC-BMGF collaborative research project '*Delivering Digital Financial Services for the Poor in the East African Community (DFSP-EAC)*'. The research project was undertaken in six East African Community Economies namely: Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and South Sudan

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**Prof Herman Musahara**



**Mr. Senvy Maistry**



**Mr. Chris Songa Musonera**

The welcoming remarks were made by Prof Herman Musahara on behalf of Dr Charles Ruranga, the Legal Representative of EPRN. Prof Musahara reiterated the importance of research dissemination and the move from merely publishing papers to ensuring the research findings are understood and used by intended audiences. He emphasized the need for social inclusion (particularly people living with disability) in financial services and encouraged participants to embrace digital financial services. He said that in a bid to promote financial inclusion and digital financial services in the country, several policies have been enacted by the government and innovations have been undertaken by financial service providers.

Mr Senvy Maistry, the chief

communications officer, AERC, gave an overview on the work of AERC, including its three pillars: research, training and policy, which allow the institution to reach its key objectives. He informed participants that AERC capacity building and research programmes have benefitted a network of about 20,000 experts from across the world and sectors. Mr Senvy explained the context, background and rationale for the Financial Inclusion and Market Development research project which resonates well with the AERC strategic plan (2020-2025) which aims at improving quality and expanding influence in the region. He further highlighted the rationale for the dissemination workshop as a tool to devising evidence-based solutions to



**A section of participants listening to presentations in Kigali.**

- **Disability, digital financial services and financial inclusion:** Evidence from Rwanda by Ggombe Kasim Munyegera and Seth Kwizera.
- **Development of the digital financial ecosystem in Rwanda:** Drivers, lessons and way forward by Ggombe Kasim Munyegera and Agnes Mutuyimana
- **Gender, digital financial services and financial inclusion:** Empirical evidence from Rwanda by Ggombe Kasim Munyegera.
- **Access to digital financial services and women empowerment:** Evidence from rural Rwanda by Rosemary Botha, Tony Mwenda Kamminga, Methode Tuyisenge.

**Prof Musahara reiterated the importance of research dissemination and the move from merely publishing papers to ensuring the research findings get understood and used by intended audience. He emphasized the need for social inclusion (particularly disability) in financial services and encouraged participants to embrace digital financial services.**

the Digital Financial Services (DFS) gap in Rwanda.

The guest of honor, Mr Chris Songa Musonera, from the National Bank of Rwanda said that overall financial inclusion rates in Rwanda are quite high, at 93% of the adult population in Rwanda. However,

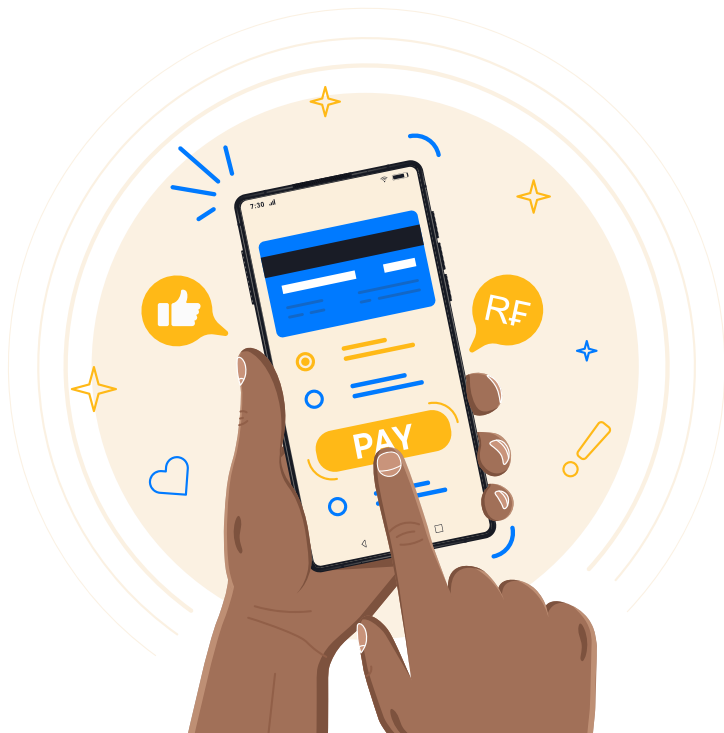
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usage remains relatively lower especially among women; for example, women are less represented in formal services especially those offered by banks. He further added that women have a higher propensity to borrow, but they tend to borrow smaller amounts and prefer informal groups (ibimina) as a source of credit. Additionally, he noted that people, including women, now have access to digital loans, which provide them with credit in ways that differ from traditional channels. According to Mr Songa, there is a need to develop supportive infrastructure to enhance DFS and to support persons with disabilities in accessing financial services.

**Mr Chris Songa Musonera said that overall financial inclusion rates in Rwanda are quite high, at 93% of the adult population in Rwanda. However, usage remains relatively lower especially among women; for example, women are less represented in formal services especially those offered by banks."**



### The following recommendations for more inclusiveness in accessing and use of the DFS were made during the workshop:



Enhance financial and digital literacy programmes that provide practical financial and digital literacy skills to different groups of people. Where required, the information can be put in an easy-to-understand format depending on the targeted audience (images, sketch, etc.)



Strengthen the implementation of existing policies and regulations. For example, interoperability, cyber security, the building code for physical accessibility, among others.



There is need for greater information sharing and partnerships among stakeholders including public-private partnerships (PPPs) for telecom infrastructure projects to improve service reliability especially in rural areas.



Scale up government guarantee schemes (like VUP Umurenge) on credit access for collateral-constrained groups of people.



Direct more social protection payments via mobile money instead of handing cash.



Increase access to mobile phones by providing tax exemptions for certain phone categories, thereby enabling a greater number of people to own phones in Rwanda.

# Preliminary Findings Workshop: AERC-BMGF Evidence to Drive Reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) Financing in SSA Economic Recovery Project

The AERC held a preliminary findings workshop on August 29, 2023, at the Radisson Blue hotel in Dakar, Senegal. The workshop was based on the BMGF funded collaborative research project on “Evidence to drive reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery” and media.

The research project focuses on the in-depth analysis of specific countries that have high potential to use SDR allocations for development but currently face serious debt issues. These are Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya and Senegal. The research aims at 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 workshop, four papers from the following think tanks were presented and discussed under the guidance of the project coordinator by Prof Abebe Shimeles, and AERC Collaborative research manager, Dr Dianah Muchai.



**Participants in the Special Drawing Rights Workshop**

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



## AERC Economics Researchers: Media Training Workshop



The AERC, in partnership with the ODI, conducted a Media Training for Researchers in Economics on September 11, 2023. The media training was offered by [Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja](#) (pictured), 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 the Asian Development Development. He has had wide experience of 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. Ganesh was supported by Karen Triggs, ODI’s expert Chief Press Officer, who leads our media liaison work, connecting journalists with researchers across ODI’s seven research programmes.

The workshop provided participants with advice and tips, and an opportunity to network, share experiences, and exchange insights with fellow researchers.

## 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 Center for Global Development in 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*” were presented during the session themed “The Global Debt Dilemma: What Role for the MDBs?”

# The Human Capital Development National Policy Workshop, Madagascar



**Human Capital National Policy Workshop Participants**

**O**n September 22, 2023, a National Policy Workshop was held at the Novotel Hotel and Spa, Antananarivo, Madagascar, to disseminate research results of two papers under the Human Capital Development in Africa project organised by the Research Centre, *Centre de Recherche pour le Développement (CRD)* of the *Université Catholique de Madagascar (UCM)* and supported by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

The opening remarks were made by Dr Mark Korir, AERC Manager, Training, who opened the workshop. Prof Lambert Rakotoarisoa, Rector, Catholic University of Madagascar; and Prof Marilys Razakamanana, the Director, Center for Research for Development, represented the UCM ; while the Ministry of Finance was represented by Prof Oliver Ramiandrisoa, the Director of Economic Studies and Modeling, Ministry of Economy and Finance. In attendance were representatives from the ministries of education, health, economy and finance and development partners, UNICEF, CRS, RTM, and the National Nutrition Office, among others.

The research focused on the relationship between access to healthcare and the health crisis in Madagascar, and the effects of the school canteen programme on educational success in Madagascar.

The results showed that individuals with familiar symptoms promptly sought medical treatment as a precautionary measure, whereas those with lesser-known symptoms avoided healthcare centres out of fear. Therefore, urgent action is required to enhance communication regarding the various symptoms of the health crisis and to train community health workers in the diagnosis of cases during an epidemic or pandemic.

Results also showed that the school canteen programme exhibits a constrained influence on the academic performance of students in Madagascar. Although the provision of school canteen enhances students' reading skills, it does not impact on their mathematical proficiency. While the programme's effects were inconspicuous within public elementary schools, there was a marginal enhancement in academic outcomes among students attending private schools. The efficacy of the school canteen programme is contingent upon various criteria associated with the socio-economic circumstances of the targeted students and the quality of education.



## DISSEMINATION WEBINAR

# “The Impact of the War in Ukraine: Food Security and Compounding Development Challenges”

**U**nder the ‘Exploring the Impacts of the War in Ukraine on Lower-income Countries’ collaborative research project funded by the IDRC, the ERF organised a Webinar on September 19, 2023 to disseminate the key policy findings and implications of the project, among policy experts in the field.

The major objective of the collaborative research effort was 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 papers disseminated from the different institutions were as follows:

Institution	Paper/Presenters
<b>AERC</b>	Exploring the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on low-income economies using the GVAR by Samson M’buoke, Abebe Shimeles, Daniel Guarara and Dianah Ngui
<b>PEP</b>	The impact of the war in Ukraine on Africa: A Global-CGE analysis by Caesar Cororaton, Heinrich Bohlmann and Jessika Bohlmann
<b>ERF</b>	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
	The impacts of the war in Ukraine on food security in “Egypt & Sudan” and “Morocco & Senegal by Mohammed Benayad
	The impacts of the war in Ukraine on food security in Kenya & Ethiopia: Options for regional trade collaboration by Alemayu Geda and Phillip Musyoka
	The impacts of the war in Ukraine on food security in South Africa and Mozambique: Exploring the roles of the Maputo Corridor, SADC, and continental sources by Nicholas Ngepah



# Resilience to Shocks and Pathways to Recovery: Perspectives from the Global South

**T**he AERC participated in the hybrid event organised by Economic Research Forum (ERF) in collaboration with the IDRC, on the side of the annual meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Morocco in October 2023. It convened about 25-30 participants in a hybrid format that allowed other participants to join online and participate in the discussion.

The event served as a platform for sharing the findings of the collective research efforts from different regions and to foster cross-fertilization and mutual learning across regions of the world. The AERC was represented by Dr Dianah Muchai who presented findings from the collaborative project on “Exploring the impacts of the war in Ukraine on lower-income countries” during the session on the “Impact of the War in Ukraine on Africa: Food Security and Regional Cooperation”. In her presentation titled “Resilience-building in Africa: navigating shocks and policy implications,” Dr Muchai emphasised that there was need to promote agricultural self-sufficiency taking note of the fact that regional shocks on production (e.g climate) can jeopardise self-sufficiency, particularly in countries with low and fragile production structures and therefore there was need to diversify food consumption in general as well as strengthen regional trade.

The event brought together several regional organisations to share knowledge and engage with the wider development community on how to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks drawing on results from the work carried out by partners in these projects.

# Resilience Building in Africa: Navigating Shocks and Policy Implications

The AERC participated in a side event during the 2023 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Marrakech, Morocco, on October 11, 2023. The event jointly organised by ODI and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), brought together top experts, policymakers and thought leaders to share insights, exchange ideas, and define effective strategies for building resilience in Africa through policy reform and implementation.



AERC staff and other participants during the annual meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and IMF in Marrakech, Morocco

The event aimed at examining critical issues on how shocks – economic, environmental, or conflict – affect the African continent, and how resilience can be fostered through strategic policymaking and implementation to achieve development objectives and counter the impact of crises going forward. The dialogue provided a platform for thought leaders and policymakers to discuss, debate, and define the ways forward. The dialogue built on the transformative research funded by the IDRC and conducted in collaboration with esteemed organisations such as the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Economic Research Forum (ERF), Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP),

and ODI. The event, which focused on sharing insights from research and practical experiences of experts and practitioners in the field, was moderated by Prof. Dirk Willem te Velde, Director, International Development Group, ODI, and Professor of Practice, Centre for Global Finance, SOAS University of London. Speakers included Sara Pantuliano, Chief Executive ODI; Catherine Anne Maria Pattilo, Deputy Director of the African Department, IMF; Dianah Muchai, Manager, Collaborative Research at the AERC; Ibrahim Elbadawi, Managing Director, ERF; Phylis Papadavid, ODI; and Victor Murinde, AXA Professor in Global Finance, Director, Centre for Global Finance, SOAS, University of London.



# Impacts of the War in Ukraine on Food Security in Lower-Income Countries

## Gender Training and Inception Workshop



The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in collaboration with Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) and Economic Research Forum (ERF) are carrying out a research project on “*Impacts of War in Ukraine on Food Security in Low Income Countries*” funded by the IDRC Global Affairs Canada.

The overall objective of the collaborative research effort is to support policy responses that are evidence-informed and gender-responsive, to address the current impacts of the war on food security and enhance longer-term resilience to shocks for vulnerable populations in low-income countries in Africa and the Middle East. The project is implemented in liaison with

gender experts to ensure that the gender component is integrated. These include Marzia Fontana (Institute of Development Studies, London School of Economics and Political Studies), Laetitia Pettinotti (ODI) and Lanoi Maloy (AERC).

To kick off the project, the AERC held an inception and gender training workshop on November 14, 2023, where four papers

were presented from the collaborating institutions. The workshop was graced by the AERC Interim Executive director, Prof. Dominique Njinkeu, Arjan De Haan (IDRC), Prof. Jane Mariara (Executive Director, PEP), and Dr. Yasmine Fahim (Senior Programs Officer, ERF).

### Papers presented during the inception workshop.

<b>AERC</b>	The impact of Russia-Ukraine war policy interventions across different economic sectors in Kenya with gender dimension
<b>PEP</b>	Impact of the war in Russia-Ukraine on African economies
<b>ERF</b>	New individual data on the war in Ukraine
	How did the war in Ukraine affect Egypt and Kenya’s households? (empirical paper)

# Stakeholders Engagement Workshop: Reforming the Tax Policy and Institutional Measures for Kenya



Stakeholders engagement workshop.

**T**he African Economic Research Consortium hosted a stakeholder engagement workshop on November 30, 2023, in Nairobi at the Sarova Panafric Hotel.

The workshop was graced by Prof Njuguna Ndung'u (Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Economic Planning, Kenya), Prof Dominique Njinkeu (former interim Executive Director, AERC), and Humphrey W. Mulongo (Commissioner General, Kenya Revenue Authority), who gave opening remarks.

The stakeholder's engagement workshop focused on the tax related studies that are aimed at bringing about reforms in the tax policy, the tax instruments and how to optimise them to generate revenue in an equitable and cost-effective way. The studies are part of the priority research areas under the Government of Kenya - AERC - University of Copenhagen and University of Copenhagen Development Economics Research Group's three-year collaborative research project on Economic Research and Policy-Making in Kenya (ERPMK). This project aims to develop 16 research papers that will inform tax reforms in Kenya over the next three years. The research work will contribute to the formulation of the Finance Bill and budget for the fiscal year 2024/25.

The collaborative research project which is supported by the Royal Danish Embassy in Nairobi aims at generating high-quality research, which can provide policy advice to decision makers in Kenya.



### Capacity Building and Technical Training on SDR and Debt, Media, and Policy Outreach Training at Nairobi, Kenya



Participants in the capacity building and technical training workshop on SDR and Debt.

The AERC has been implementing a BMGF-funded collaborative research project on “Evidence to drive reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery”. The goal of research under this project is to produce high-quality research products and policy recommendations that are responsive to the specific needs and policy priorities of four African countries that have high potential to use SDR allocations for development but currently face serious debt issues.

These include Kenya, Senegal, Ethiopia and Ghana. To provide the greatest potential for the uptake of policy recommendations coming out of the research, AFRODAD in partnership with the AERC conducted a capacity building and technical assistance activities on SDR and debt, Media, and Policy outreach training on December 6 - 7, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. The aim of the workshop was to enable the different think tanks supported by AERC to: (a) Undertake technical assistance/outreach activities with policymakers, ministries of finance, central banks, the media and civil society organisations that will provide a platform for extended dialogue on the policy recommendations and (b) Create awareness of the available data, research/evidence to allow the media and civil society organisations support proposed/required improvements in performance and possible policy actions.

The workshop was facilitated by

Prof Abebe Shimeles, the project coordinator, who delivered a keynote address and shared his live experience of dealing with Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) at the national and local levels in Ethiopia. Dr Daouda Sembane, Executive Director of AfricCatalyst, gave a talk on “SDRs and Debt: Situating SDRs in the development finance landscape.” Mr Jason Rosario Braganza, Executive Director of the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), conducted a training session on accountability, transparency, and the role of SDRs. Mr Shem Joshua Otieno provided training on advocating for Special Drawing Rights to reform the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to finance the poly-crisis and achieve Agenda 2063. Ms Catherine Mithia was responsible for group activities and conducted training on making the case for and against the rechanneling of SDRs through Multilateral Development Banks.



## FEMNET SDRS Convening Workshop on Engaging Gender Advocates for Inclusive Economic Recovery:

### A Forecast on SDRS in Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, and Senegal



The AERC researchers under the BMGF funded collaborative research project on “Evidence to drive reforms for Special Drawing Rights (SDR) financing in SSA economic recovery” attended an in-person SDR convening workshop in Lusaka, Zambia, from December 12 to 13, 2023.

The primary objectives of the convening in Zambia were to

1. facilitate discussions to enhance participant’s understanding of SDRs, their impact on the economy, the possibility of rechanneling SDRs towards initiatives geared towards achieving gender equality, and their general role in inclusive economic recovery and
2. to share successful and possible advocacy strategies to champion the use of SDRs for inclusive economic recovery and best

practice for encouraging governments and relevant institutions to allocate and utilise SDRs effectively.

The SDRs convening brought together a diverse range of participants including:

1. government representatives and policy makers,
2. civil society organisations, NGOs, and women’s rights advocates,
3. academics, researchers, and debt experts,
4. private sector representatives, and

5. media representatives, among several others.

Specifically, the participants included Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network Africa (JENA), Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM), Youth for Tax Justice Network (YTJN), African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), Oxfam, Twaweza East Africa, AfricBrief, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) represented by KIPPRA and University of Ghana, The University of Zambia (UNZA), Centre de Recherche et de Formation en Agriculture et Technologies Innovations (CREFAT), The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA Kenya), Institute for Public Finance (IPF) and the host organization, The African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET). AERC researchers got more insights on how to enrich their papers.



# Global Vector Autoregression (GVAR) Modeling Workshop



Participants of the modelling workshop.

**A**ERC with funding from International Development Research Centre (IDRC) hosted a five-day technical training on GVAR (Global Vector Autoregression) modeling, from January 8 to 12, 2024, at the Sarova Panafric Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop targeted researchers from the collaborative research project on ‘Exploring the Impacts of the War in Ukraine on Lower-income Countries’.

The project’s aim was to examine the macroeconomic channels, impacts, and potential responses to the Russia-Ukraine War (RUW) shock, both in the short to medium run and in the long run under alternative scenarios of the shock’s size. The primary aim of the training workshop was to equip participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of GVAR modelling. Moreover, the objective extended to the application of the knowledge acquired in the participants’ respective fields, enabling them to use GVAR models to conduct comprehensive economic analyses, create robust economic forecasts, and make informed decisions. The training was delivered in an interactive learning environment, with a high level of participation through questions and lively discussions. At the end of the lectures, participants worked on a group assignment where they built, estimated, and performed dynamic analysis with a GVAR model from scratch using the GVAR Toolbox 2.0.

# Task Force on Climate, Development and the IMF Meeting

The Task Force on Climate, Development, and the International Monetary Fund convened an in-person meeting at Boston University from January 28-31, 2024. The discussions provided the Task Force with an opportunity to discuss their strategy and review the policy engagement and communication efforts.



Participants in the climate development and IMF meeting.



Climate change and development meeting.

The meeting was attended by Abbi Kedir, Director of Research at the African Economic Research Consortium, who presented preliminary findings on Public Spending, Debt Burden and Climate Change Response: Evidence from Africa.

AERC is a member of the task force which comprises a global consortium of experts who employ empirical, rigorous research methodologies to advocate for a development-centred approach to addressing climate issues within the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



# Collaborative Research News

## Upcoming Events: Collaborative Research

### **Final Stakeholders' Engagement Workshop: Reforming the Tax Policy and Institutional Measures for Kenya**

The African Economic Research Consortium, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Treasury and Economic Planning and the Development Economics Research Group at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH-DERG), held a second stakeholder workshop on March 8, 2024. The Stakeholders Engagement Workshop aimed at getting more input on the studies from the relevant key stakeholders. The findings served as a basis and input to policy reforms in the National Treasury, thereby enhancing the evidence base for informed economic policymaking in Kenya. The studies commenced in July 2023 and have benefitted from inputs from the inaugural stakeholders' engagement held on November 30, 2023.

## Research Methods and Proposal Writing Skills Workshop for Sub-Saharan African Women



Participants of the AERC Research Methods Workshop held in September 2023 at Fairview Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

A ERC is at the forefront of fostering inclusivity in capacity development for underrepresented members of the network in training and research. One of the groups that has had low representation is women researchers in the Economics discipline.

Fewer women than men are likely to participate in economic research. The International Economic Association (2023) notes that enhancing women's leadership in the economics profession is tied to access to economic education. This includes increasing training opportunities for women in economics at an advanced level and reducing structural or systemic impediments that adversely affect them. AERC has not been left behind in the quest to enhance women's participation in economic

research and development of skills. AERC organised a technical workshop on Research Methods and Proposal Writing Skills that was held on September 19 -30, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. A total of 23 women from 15 Sub-Saharan African countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Uganda, Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Côte d'Ivoire) attended the technical workshop. Ten of them came from Francophone countries, and one came from a



Lusophone country. The trainer for the technical workshop was Prof. Abayomi Samuel Oyekale, Northwest University, Mafikeng Campus, South Africa.

# Thematic Research News

Collaborative Research News October - December 2023

## Re-Examining Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationship in African Economies (GPIR)

**A**ERC held several in-country dissemination workshops for the GPIR collaborative project. Four in-country dissemination workshops were held in South Africa, Togo, Cameroon, and Kenya from September -December 2023.

### South Africa's in-country dissemination

AERC, through the African Institute for Inclusive Growth (AIIG) in South Africa, held an in-country dissemination workshop for the GPIR collaborative project. During the dissemination workshop, two papers from the project were presented: "Economic Shocks and Responses of Poverty to Growth and Inequality in South Africa" by Nicholas Ngepah and "COVID-19, Poverty, and Income-related Health Inequalities in South Africa" by Abiodun Omotayo and Adebayo Ogunniyi.



Re-Examining Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationship in Africa workshop.

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## Togo in-country dissemination

In collaboration with Le Centre Autonome d'Études et de Renforcement des Capacités pour le Développement au Togo (CADERDT) (The Autonomous Center for Studies and Capacity Building for Development in Togo), AERC disseminated a paper on “Choice of the type of school and outcomes for youth in the labour market in Togo” by Etayibtalnam Koudjom, Eric Hubert Ngoko, Mazignada Sika Limazie and Lionie Mafang on November 23, 2023.



## Cameroon in-country dissemination

In collaboration with Centre d'Analyse et de Recherche sur les Politiques Économiques et Sociales du Cameroun (Center for Analysis and Research on Economic and Social Policies of Cameroon), AERC disseminated a paper on “Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on income inequalities in Cameroon: Influence of the employment status” by Rodrigue Nda'chi Deffo, Michèle Estelle Ndonou Tchoundop, Benjamin Fomba Kamba on October 16, 2023.

## Kenya in-country dissemination

In collaboration with the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, AERC disseminated two papers, “Income Inequality and Growth: Calibration and Simulation for the Kenyan Economy” by Gilbert Mbarara and “Coping Strategies, the Standard of Living and Inequalities during the COVID-19 Period and Effect of COVID-19 on the Labour Market in Kenya” by Eleftherios Giovanis and Öznur Özdamar on December 8, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya.



Dissemination workshops.

# Health Systems Research, Ethics and Protocol Development Training Workshop for District Health Management Teams in Botswana

**P**ROPEL Health held a training workshop on “Health Systems Research, Ethics and Protocol Development for District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) in Kasane, Botswana, from November 20-24, 2023.



**Health systems research workshop participants.**

The training was conducted jointly by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), PROPEL Health Botswana and Health Policy Research and Development, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Botswana. The participants hailed from three referral hospitals (Sbrana Psychiatric Hospital, Princess Marina Hospital and Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital) and 15 District Health Management Teams (DHMTs) (Chobe, Gaborone, Greater Selibe Phikwe, Tutume, Kweneng, Okavango, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi North, Ngami, Greater Lobatse, Southern, Kgatleng, Mahalapye, Serowe/Palapye). Of the 65 participants, 28 were men and 37 were women. The training aimed to impart knowledge and skills to the DHMTs to develop sound health systems research protocols. These protocols are designed to solve health service delivery challenges and build the research capacity of the DHMTs.

The opening session of the training was graced by Deputy Permanent Secretary Moses Keetile, who reiterated the need for skill development for the DHMTs to conduct research to improve health systems function in their districts.

Marlene Nkete, the Country Director, PROPEL Health also graced the training workshop. She highlighted the role of PROPEL Botswana in the facilitation of the training and emphasised their role in advancing the country's health agenda. The overarching goal of the training was for each District team to develop a comprehensive and competitive research protocol that meets society's needs. It was also envisaged that the team, by the end of training, was to develop research protocols that have a bearing on health system research. The training was specifically tailored to provide participants with theoretical knowledge on health systems research, ethics, and protocol development. This aimed to help them understand the nature and structures of health systems and protocol development. The training also guided participants on constructing problem statements and research objectives, conducting a relevant literature review, understanding methodology, study design, and sampling,

choosing appropriate methodologies for their research protocols, constructing budgets, and work plans for proposed research areas. Additionally, the training included reviewing protocols developed by participants for their selected priority areas, and for those who had not yet selected priority areas, guiding them and reviewing their chosen priority areas. Participants were also guided in designing monitoring, evaluation, and learning frameworks for their proposed research areas.

The workshop facilitators were Dr. Moses Muriithi (Department of Economics and Development Studies, the University of Nairobi), Dr. Naomi Setshegetso (Department of Economics, University of Botswana), Dr. Scholastica Odhiambo (African Economic Research Consortium), and Abia Sebaka, Kgomotso Motlhanka, Banyana Sekwati, and Lesego Oduetse from HPRD, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Botswana.

### African Think Tank Summit

AERC participated in the 9th African Think Tanks Summit, organised by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in Lusaka, Zambia, from November 8 to 10, 2023. The summit theme was “Linking Evidence, Policies, and Practice to Support the Implementation of the AfCFTA.” AERC was represented by Dr. Abbi Kedir, Director of Research, and Prof. Olawale Ogunkola, Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics, University of Ibadan.



### African Economic Conference

AERC participated in the African Economic Conference AfDB, UNECA and UNDP on November 16 -18, 2023, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The theme of the conference was “Imperatives for Sustainable Development in Africa”. AERC was represented by Prof. Dominique Njinkeu, the former interim Executive Director, and Prof. Olawale Ogunkola, Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics, University of Ibadan.

# World Bank Kenya Analytical Programme on Forced Displacement (KAP-FD) Mid-review and Advanced Analytical Methods for Survey Data Technical Training Workshops



Survey data technical training workshop participants.

**A**ERC organised a Mid-Review Workshop on November 30, 2023, for the KAP-FD early career researchers. Ten papers were presented at the workshop, with eight of the researchers being women and two men. The chair of the workshop was Prof Rosemary Atieno, Department of Economics and Development Studies, the University of Nairobi; Prof Germano Mwabu, Department of Economics and Development Studies, the University of Nairobi; Prof Tomson Ogwang from the Department of Economics, Brock University, Canada, and Prof Erick Nyambedha, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Maseno University. From December 1-7, 2023, 13 researchers, including those with lived experience with forced displacement, were trained in advanced analytical methods for survey data. The workshop instructor was Prof Samuel Oyekale from North-West University, South Africa. In the workshops, the World Bank team was represented by Dr Precious Zikhali, Dr Patrick Muthui and Ann Kittony.

## Meet Our New Staff



**Wilmar Terry Achieng**

Wilmar Terry Achieng is a communications specialist with a diverse background in digital marketing, drafting communications strategies, and Client-relationship management. She joins AERC as a Temporary Communications/Publication Assistant.

Wilmar holds a bachelor's degree in communication and French from University of Nairobi. In addition, she excels in driving brand visibility and executing impactful communication initiatives, is proficient in managing social media accounts, digital campaigns among others.

Wilmar has over the years gained professional experience in this field. Previously, Wilmar has worked at 5ive Africa, Global Landscapes Forum, Kenrus Limited and Rebels Market in different capacities.



**Mercy Naliaka Simiyu**

Mercy Naliaka Simiyu is a dedicated and versatile administrative assistant with good organizational skills and thorough knowledge of corporate policies and procedures. In addition, she has excellent communication and people skills with extensive strategic planning capabilities. Ms. Naliaka has more than seven years work experience having worked for: East Africa Community, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ Tanzania), The Embassy of Brazil in Kenya, University of Maryland, Vision Quest Consultants and the Ministry of Health.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from United States International University (USIU - Africa) and is currently pursuing her Masters in Development Studies from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

When not at work, Mercy loves spending time outdoors, participating in Kenya Girl Guide Young Leader group activities and is an avid baker!

# Celebrating AERC



## 35 years of Growing African Economies

**F**ounded in 1988, AERC is dedicated to enhancing local capabilities for conducting independent and thorough investigations into issues relevant to the administration of African economies. With a commitment to purpose and improving the quality of life, AERC has steadily expanded its efforts to strengthen capacity in policy influence and foster evidence-based development outcomes throughout Africa.



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