

AERC INSIGHT

The African Economic Research Consortium



Alumni Focus

Mgeni E.
Msafiri: My CPP
Experience

Pg.22

25th Series of the AERC
Senior Policy Seminar (SPS):

Human Capital Development in Africa

AERC's Board Chair, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey awarded an honorary doctorate from Stellenbosch University Pg.20



57th Plenary Session on 'African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks' Pg.4



Contents

4

57th Plenary Session on 'African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks'



8

Concurrent and Technical Sessions at the 57th Biannual Research Workshop

12

AERC welcomes new member of the Board

The AERC is delighted to welcome Dr. Andrew Dabalen to the Board as an Institutional Director representing the World Bank.



20

AERC's Board Chair, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey awarded an honorary doctorate from Stellenbosch University



24

Rodrick Mbirizi-Luanar: My CMAAE Experience



25

African economies and overlapping crises: How to respond to the rising global headwinds?



Maturation and Admission of Universities

9

AERC Senior Policy Seminar (SPS) on Human Capital Development in Africa

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) hosted a major flagship event in the first quarter of this calendar year.



Note from the Executive Director

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this issue of the AERC INSIGHT!

I am thrilled with what has come together over these last few months, and we are glad to share this latest edition of our newsletter with you. AERC is focused on how we can use economic research to change our lives for the better in the African continent.

In this issue, we are sharing a lot of information including the forthcoming AERC Senior Policy Seminar on Human Capital Development in Africa; The 57th Plenary Session of the AERC Biannual Research Workshop, which was on *African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks*; Maturation and Admission of Universities; Modernisation of AERC's Digital Ecosystem; Collaborative Research Projects; Alumni as well as other significant events.

I know that by closely following AERC's activities, we can see how the organisation is taking intentional and conscious steps to transform lives. We have for more than 30 years come up with many innovative research initiatives as well as designed steps on how we can navigate the continent's terrain to influence economic policies to transform lives in Africa. Thus, it feels like an exciting time to be at AERC and share these research outputs.



AERC continues to showcase its considerable influence across the continent, and this latest manifestation comes in the form of the appointment of our former Executive Director, Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, as Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury and Economic Planning for the Republic of Kenya.

The theme for this issue of the INSIGHT is pretty consistent with the many African problems, given the fact that Human capital—the education, skills, and health of people — plays a pivotal role in the transformation of African economies. And it is important to note that sub-Saharan Africa scores the lowest of all the world's regions on the World Bank's Human Capital Index, which is a measurement of how well countries invest in the next generation of workers.

AERC continues to showcase its considerable influence across the continent, and this latest manifestation comes in the form of the appointment of our former Executive Director, Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, as Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury and Economic Planning for the Republic of Kenya. This is an immense honour for us, and for the whole network of AERC. I wish to acknowledge the incredible work and legacy left behind by Prof. Ndung'u, one of the most fervent supporters of AERC and its mandate for the continent.

I hope this newsletter will offer you something of value as we strive as an organisation to build a solid foundation for significant and sustainable changes across so many sectors.

I'm looking forward to receiving comments from you to help us improve on subsequent issues. I welcome all feedback, observations, and questions you may have on the various topics and news items in this edition. Feel free to read on and share with your friends. It's free, and most importantly, it's fun!

Welcome!

Prof. Théophile Azomahou
Ag. Executive Director, AERC

News

57th Plenary Session on 'African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks'

The December 2022 Biannual Research Workshop was held from 27 November to 2 December 2022. The 57th plenary session was held in a hybrid model on 27 November 2022 on the theme ***'African economies: recovery agenda from multiple shocks'***. A total of 210 participated physically at the Trademark Hotel, Nairobi, and 120 attended virtually.

First Session Speakers

Chair of the Session



Prof. Ernest Aryeetey,
Chair of the Board, AERC

Keynote Speaker



Prof. Stephen A. O'Connell
Gil and Frank Mustin
Professor, Swarthmore College,
USA

Chair, High Level Policy Panel



Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u
Cabinet Secretary, The National
Treasury and Economic
Planning, Government of Kenya

Convenor



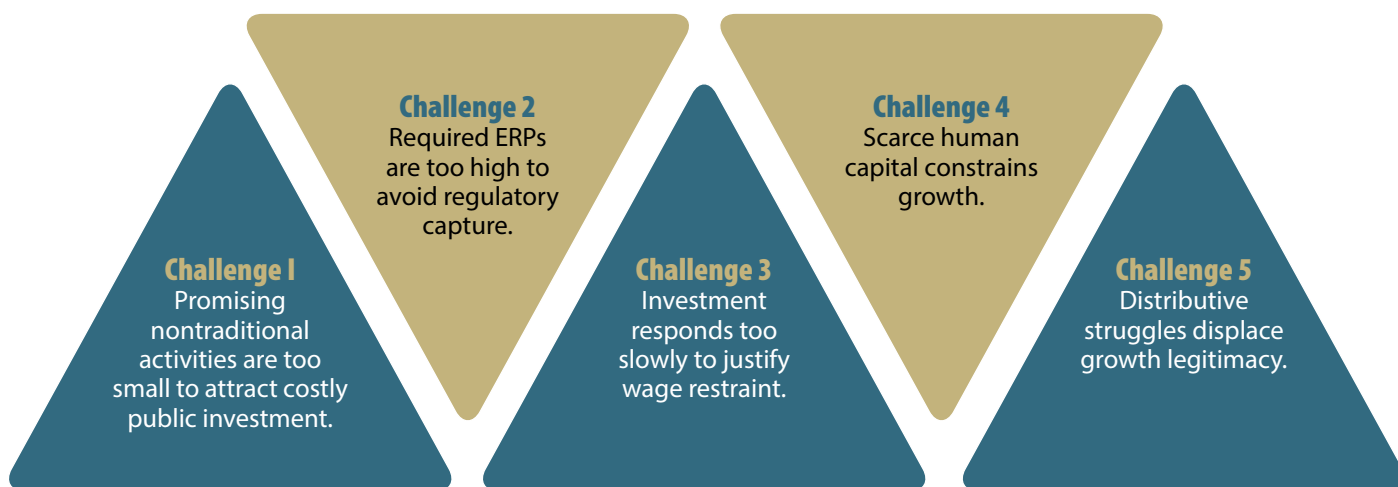
Prof. Théophile Azomahou,
Acting Executive Director and
Director of Training, AERC



The 2nd Prof. Benno Ndulu Memorial Lecture was presented by the keynote Speaker Prof. Stephen O'Connell of Swarthmore College, US. at the 57th Biannual Plenary Session. The title of his lecture was 'Resource Abundance and Inclusive Growth Challenge in Africa' with reference to the work titled 'Can Africa

The 2nd Prof. Benno Ndulu Memorial Lecture was presented by the keynote Speaker Prof. Stephen O'Connell of Swarthmore College, US. at the 57th Biannual Plenary Session.

Claim the 21st Century?'. Written 20 years ago with a team of African writers, he noted that they had envisioned an inclusive and prosperous future for the African economies. Prof. O'Connell in his lecture said that for African economies to achieve productivity growth in resource abundant countries some challenges had to be addressed:



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Prof O’Connell reiterated that since the early 1990s the policy environment has improved to facilitate economic growth, however the deep dependence on primary commodity exports across Africa has led to the continent losing in diversification into manufactured exports. He raised a question further on the readiness of the African continent to diversify. On this merit, he commented that the economic structure of commodity dependent economies poses several challenges to export diversification that governments in Africa may find difficult to overcome. For a positive outlook, first, he observed that the external factors such as the role of China are moderate while that of primary commodity prices and

capital inflows are reversing. The external environment is currently increasingly favourable to export diversification, compared to 20 years ago and may persist if economic fundamentals

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in African economies are stable. Second, concentrating on non-resource based exports from the service sector is likely to constitute a major set of new pathways for opportunities in African economies. The drivers for the positive outlook are, telecommunication infrastructure, broad penetration of cell phone usage and the prevalence of English-speaking population on the continent. Finally, he noted that the 20 years of favourable policy space have led to accumulation of capital in terms of public infrastructure capital and human resources in many African countries. As such, he concluded by observing that the narrated developments may have set up the structural preconditions for diversification into new export space.

Second Session Speakers – Presentation of Concept Papers on ‘African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks’

Dr. Hanan Morsy, presented a concept paper on *‘The Impact of the War in Ukraine on the Recovery and Resilience of African Economies’*.



Dr. Hanan Morsy,
Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist, UNECA

Prof. Stefan Dercon presented a concept paper on *‘Development Narratives and the Political Economy of Development in Sub-Saharan Africa’*.



Prof. Stefan Dercon,
Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government and the Economics Department at Oxford University, England

Dr. Amar Bhattacharya presented a concept paper on *‘Accelerating Climate Action and Sustainable Development in Africa: Meeting the Financing Challenge’*.



Dr. Amar Bhattacharya,
Senior Fellow Brookings Institution, Washington DC, USA

Prof. Kevin Gallagher presented a concept paper on *‘External Shocks and Fiscal Space for Climate-Resilient Development in sub-Saharan Africa’*.



Professor Kevin Gallagher,
Director, Global Policy Center, Boston University, USA.

Third Session Speakers – High Level Policy Panel ‘African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks’



Honourable Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane, Luwa Member of Parliament and the Minister of Finance and National Planning in Zambia.



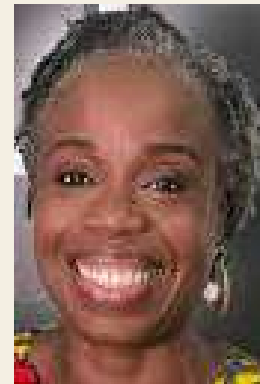
Dr. Anthony Simpasa, lead Economist, Nigeria and Acting Manager, Macroeconomic Policy, Debt Sustainability and Forecasting Division, African Development Bank.



Dr. Rose Ngugi, Executive Director of the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)



Dr. Ramiandrisoa Tiarinisaina Olivier, Head of General Directorate of Economy and Planning, Malagasy Ministry of Economy and Finance



Mrs. Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi, Executive Vice-President at the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)

The high level policy panel discussed economic opportunities, challenges and risks arising from multiple shocks in Africa. With keen interest on the theme ‘African Economies: Recovery Agenda from Multiple Shocks’, the panelists explored the impact of frequent and multiple shocks that have plagued African economies in the past few decades, including, but not limited to; climate change induced shocks, the Covid-19 pandemic and currently the ongoing war in Ukraine, and thereby identifying the path to recovery and providing critical thinking in building resilience against future shocks. The discussions profiled various

shocks, both of domestic and external origin; the path to recovery, debt resolution and fiscal sustainability, building resilience to overcome future shocks with emphasis on regional integration and smart industrialisation. The questions posed to the panelists covered a wide range of issues: the impact of the multiple shocks affecting countries and regional blocks of Africa.

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Concurrent and Technical Sessions

at the 57th Biannual Research Workshop

The concurrent and technical sessions for the thematic researchers were held from 28 November 2022 to 1 December 2022. A total of 80 reports were presented and 87 resource and guest resource persons (RPs) attended.

111

The number of researchers who attended the session was 111 and 10 were CPP students.

To increase the quality of research and feedback mechanism AERC CPP invited 10 thesis supervisors from the CPP universities as guest resource persons. The number of researchers who attended the session was 111 and 10 were CPP students. There were 47 women (42%) among the participating researchers. Of the total 80 reports, 41 were thematic new (NP) and revised research proposals (RNP), 16 were interim reports (WIP), 13 final reports (FR) and one CPP best chapter papers from PhD thesis and nine proposals as summarised in Table 1. The outcome of the proposal development workshop held on 13-14 June 2022 culminated into the researchers who were trained to join the thematic research pipeline. Out of the 37, who received the proposal development grants, 14 have joined the thematic research pipeline and presented papers in the respective groups.

Table 1: Thematic Researchers and CPP Students

Thematic Group	M	F	Total	FR	WIP	RNP	NP	CPP	Total	RPs
Group A - Poverty, labour markets and income distribution	10	11	21	4	4	2	4	3	17	21
Group B - Macroeconomic policy and growth	21	8	29	2	-	1	11	2	16	18
Group C - Finance and resource mobilisation	12	12	24	3	6	1	6	-	16	15
Group D - Production, trade and economic integration	13	6	19	4	3	-	6	3	16	16
Group E - Agriculture, climate change & natural resource management	8	10	18	-	3	2	8	2	15	17
Total	64	47	111	13	16	6	35	10	80	87

AERC Senior Policy Seminar (SPS) on Human Capital Development in Africa

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) will host a major flagship event in the first quarter of this calendar year. The 25th AERC Senior Policy Seminar (SPS XXV) will take place on March 29-30, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya, and the broad theme for this big event is ***Human Capital Development in Africa***.

Four papers will be presented by esteemed global scholars. The first session will see **Lant Pritchett**, *Harvard University USA*, kick off the sessions with a critical look at ***A Lifecycle, Economy-Wide Framework for Human Capital in Africa***. The second session will feature the second presenter, **Jere R Behrman**, *The Ronald O. Perelman Centre for Political Science and Economics, USA*, who will ratchet up the discussion with a paper on ***Human Capital Investments and Economic Growth in Africa***.

Germano Mwabu, *University of Nairobi, Kenya*, will present the third paper on ***Human Capital Accumulation in Africa: Drivers, Consequences and Way Forward***. **Adrienne Lucas**,



University of Delaware, USA, will start the second day by presenting the fourth and last paper, ***Education in Africa: Career Progressions, Gaps in Learning Outcomes and Responding to the Learning Crisis***. These presentations will be followed by a policy roundtable. The roundtable consists of a mix of policymakers, paper presenters, non-state, and private sector actors.

AERC senior policy seminars are forums designed specifically to bring together senior policymakers from Africa to exchange experiences and deliberate on topical issues pertaining to the sustainable development of their economies.

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exchange involves an intense two-day dialogue among senior policymakers, intellectual leaders, private sector actors, and civil society based on policy-oriented research conducted by AERC network members. The ultimate goal is to promote policy based on rigour and evidence.

The theme for the conference revolves around human capital – the education, skills, and health of people – which plays a pivotal role in the transformation of African economies. Sub-Saharan Africa

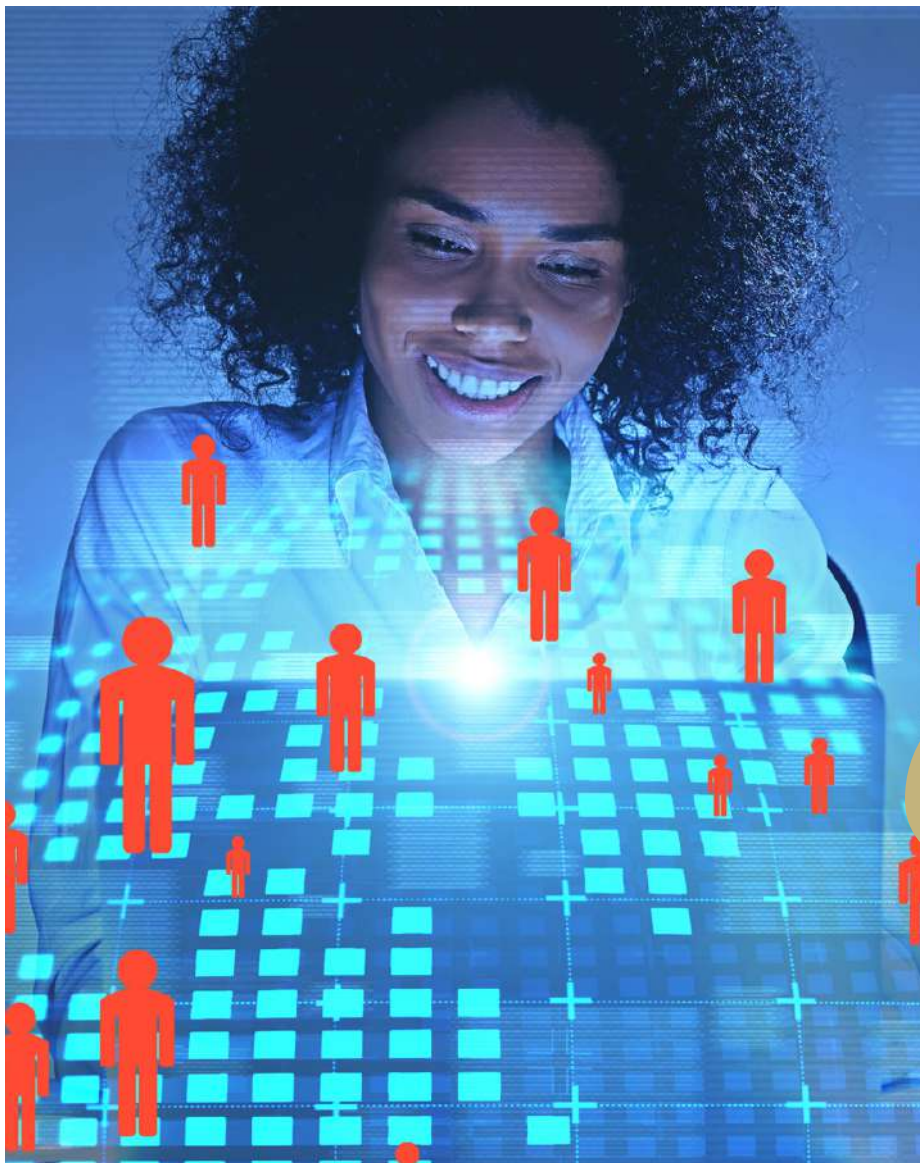
scores the lowest of all the world's regions on the World Bank's Human Capital Index (about 0.40), a measurement of how well countries invest in the next generation of workers (World Bank, 2020). This is despite the fact that access to sources of human capital in Africa, although still low, has increased significantly over the past two decades (Leornard, 2022). More households have access to health care, more students are enrolled, and families have access to more tools for improving

the quality of their life. However, despite investments in human capital, quality of life still lags significantly behind even in other developing countries, especially considering the substantial gains in access. Africa's low human capital can be explained by three interlinked factors namely: Survival, school, and health.

Human capital is critical for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in Africa. Investment in people 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. Developing human capital in Africa, therefore, requires a massive and co-ordinated effort to strengthen the quantity, efficiency, and impact of investments in people. There is a need to facilitate regional and country-owned policy reforms, action plans and cross-country learning in four key areas namely: Expanding effective government investment in social services, introducing reforms and innovation to improve service delivery, committing to equity and inclusiveness and addressing fertility and gender issues to harness a demographic dividend.

Enhancing the capacity of African governments to make policy decisions that will confront the challenges of building human capital for accelerated inclusive development in a 21st Century context is fundamental to improving the capability of the continent (and its policymakers) to address the key constraints on human capital accumulation.

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The AERC collaborative research project on 'Human Capital Development in Africa' seeks to generate evidence on the challenges of building human capital for accelerated inclusive development as well as address key constraints on human capital accumulation, such as weak public financial management (PFM) and service delivery systems (SDM). In addition, this collaborative research project seeks to provide policy reforms that would enable Africa's young people to grow up with optimal health and be equipped with the right skills to compete in the digitising global economy. The project involves both framework papers and country case studies.

The framework papers seek to investigate broad, and cross-cutting issues around human capital development to improve the capability of the continent (and its policymakers) to confront human capital development challenges, and leverage the opportunities they present, as it confronts its development challenges. The country case studies seek to inform policymakers and development practitioners on human capital development in Africa from the viewpoint of individual countries and/or sub-regions (or groups of countries).

To assist policymakers and other actors improve the generation and management of knowledge on Africa's human capital and address key constraints on human capital accumulation, such as weak public financial management (PFM) and service delivery systems (SDS), the AERC intends to disseminate the findings from the above studies to senior African policymakers through its flagship dissemination vehicle, the "Senior Policy Seminar" (SPS).

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), established in 1988, is one of the most robust Research and Capacity Building Institutions in the world, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. The Consortium's mission is to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into the problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa. The AERC achieves its mission and objectives through a long-



standing collaborative and networking framework of its research and training programmes, with the support of an interactive communications and outreach programme backed

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by a comprehensive management and administration component.

At the core of the AERC is a platform for networking of individuals (researchers, resource persons, faculty, students, and policymakers) and institutions from across Africa and other parts of the world to bring synergies for enhanced developmental outcomes. For over 30 years now, the AERC has built a solid core of highly credible research and a cadre of well-trained economists who have enhanced the professional stature of the network, both locally and internationally. This credible research combined with well-trained economists has focused attention on issues critical to African development, bringing rigour and evidence to policy making.



Dr. Andrew Dabalen, Chief Economist, Africa, World Bank

AERC welcomes new member of the Board

The AERC is delighted to welcome Dr. Andrew Dabalen to the Board as an Institutional Director representing the World Bank.

Dr. Dabalen was appointed as World Bank’s Africa region Chief Economist on 1st July 2022. As the Chief Economist, he is responsible for providing guidance on strategic priorities and the technical quality of economic analysis in the region, as well as developing major regional economic studies, among other roles.

He has held various positions including Senior Economist in the World Bank’s Europe and Central Asia region, Lead Economist and Practice Manager for Poverty and Equity in Africa and most recently, Practice Manager for Poverty and Equity in the South Asia Region. His research and scholarly publications are focused on poverty and social impact analysis, inequality of opportunity, programme evaluation, risk and vulnerability, labour markets,

As the Chief Economist, he is responsible for providing guidance on strategic priorities and the technical quality of economic analysis in the region, as well as developing major regional economic studies, among other roles.

and conflict and welfare outcomes. He has co-authored regional reports on equality of opportunity for children in Africa, vulnerability and resilience in the Sahel, and poverty in a rising Africa.

A Kenyan national, Dr. Dabalen holds a master’s degree in International Development from the University of California - Davis, and a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of California - Berkeley.

Dr. Dabalen replaces Dr. Albert Zeufack on the AERC Board. Dr. Zeufack, who is the immediate former Chief Economist Africa region, represented the World Bank on the AERC Board between 2016 and 2022.

BMGF Human Capital Development Thematic Group

BMGF HCD Thematic Research Workshop

To complement AERCs Collaborative Research, the AERC Thematic Research Programme also made a call to researchers in sub-Saharan Africa to carry out research on Human Capital Development in Africa. The workshop was held **on 24-25, 2022**, back-to-back with the biannual research workshop in Nairobi, Kenya. A total of 13 lead researchers attended the workshop (10 men and three women). The meeting was chaired by Prof. Miracle Benhura and facilitated by Prof. Kedir, Prof. Magejo and Prof. Anthony Wambugu.

AFPON Project ends; ushers in a new project, PASHFARM

The AERC-BMGF project, ***Agricultural Policy Analysis for Nutrition Outcomes (AFPON)*** ended on a high note by publishing 8 papers in the December 2022 Special Issue of the *Food Policy*.

The special issue titled “*Role of Policy in Reducing Malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa*” <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/food-policy/vol/113/suppl/C> showcased 21 papers clustered in eight policy domains, agricultural extension, input subsidy, output price policy, and nutrition, among other policy domains. The AERC appreciated Prof. Chris Barret, the Editor in Chief, *Food Policy*, Dipusan Dipudass, the Journal Manager for the technical support throughout the paper review and journal production. Special thanks went to Prof. Théophile Azomahou, the Managing Editor and Ag. Executive Director, AERC and the Guest Editors, Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u, Prof. Harounan Kazianga, Prof. Raouf Boucekkine, and Dr. Mark Korir, for successfully managing the review process and generating the introductory essay titled “*Guest Editors’ Introduction: The role of policy in reducing malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa*” available at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2022.102378>. You are invited to sample the papers in this special issue of the *Food Policy* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/food-policy/vol/113/suppl/C>



Prof. Chris Barret

Prof. Théophile Azomahou

Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u

Prof. Raouf Boucekkine

Prof. Harounan Kazianga

Dr. Mark Korir

In October 2022, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) signed a grant agreement with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) to rigorously research on the food environment for nutritious foods in African retail markets. The project titled “***Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets- PASHFARM***” runs from October 2022 to December 2025 and covers sub-Saharan African countries.

Food system players seek to encourage and increase the consumption of safe, affordable, and nutritious diets. However, there are many barriers to achieving this goal, among them being affordability and accessibility of nutritious foods in markets serving low-income consumers. This project focuses on gaining a better understanding of the production, how markets can be organised, and how policies can incentivise market actors, including food SMEs, to supply safe, affordable nutritious foods to low-income urban and rural consumers, thus navigating across different segments of the market.

The AERC will utilise the collaborative research approach bringing together multidisciplinary researchers including economists, nutritionists, and gender experts from Africa and elsewhere to generate policy-oriented outputs. This enables researchers to tackle complex yet contemporary research issues with a bearing on policy-making in Africa that would otherwise not be adequately addressed by one or a few researchers, thus leveraging the diverse skills of the various researchers in the project to deliver high-quality research outputs. The call for the project Gender Expert is available here <https://aercafrica.org/opportunities/> while that for the Collaborative Research proposals is available here <https://aercafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Call-for-Collaborative-Research-Proposals-PASHFARM.pdf>. The call for Country Case Studies and Faculty Research proposals is available here <https://aercafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Call-for-Country-Case-Study-and-Faculty-Research-Proposals-PASHFARM.pdf>.



The AERC will utilise the collaborative research approach bringing together multidisciplinary researchers including economists, nutritionists, and gender experts from Africa and elsewhere to generate policy-oriented outputs.

AERC will hold Back-to-Back Policy Brief Training Workshops in Dakar, Senegal

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) will hold Back-to-Back Policy Brief Training Workshops in Dakar, Senegal from March 6 to 11. The workshops aim to build the capacity and skills of researchers in communicating their research effectively to maximise its uptake and impact.

The objectives include increasing understanding of policy processes, policymakers' needs and the role of Policy Briefs, as well as understanding the role of social media in communication and engagement.

The participants of the policy

training workshop are researchers from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Human Capital Development project. The workshop consists of lectures, tutorials, and exercises - including tutorials and exercises to improve the draft policy briefs written by the

AERC researchers. There will also be exercises on how to engage with media and social media platforms. By the end of the workshop, each participant will produce a draft Policy Brief that will be finalised with assistance from the instructor(s).

The objectives include increasing understanding of policy processes, policymakers' needs and the role of Policy Briefs, as well as understanding the role of social media in communication and engagement.



Maturation and Admission of Universities

Maturation of Universities remains an important area of focus in the current AERC strategic plan 2020-2025.

It stipulates in the period 2020–2025 to have a total of 35 universities (15 Collaborative Masters Programme (CMAP), nine Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) and 11 Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP)) to have the capacity to offer master's and PhD programmes, respectively. During the current strategic plan 2020-2025, priority has been given to Francophone countries when rolling out the envisaged maturation to increase to four universities out of the

targeted 11 universities under CPP.

For purposes of implementing the CPP, the continent was subdivided into four regions, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa, Anglophone West Africa and Francophone Africa. The universities were classified into two main categories. The first category was the Host-Degree Awarding universities that were assigned the responsibility of teaching courses in core fields. The second category was the Non-Host Degree Awarding universities that admitted and sent students to regional host universities to take core courses and thereafter to the Joint Facility for Electives (JFE) to take elective courses. This category also organised the supervision and production of student PhD theses, and awarded the degrees to successful students.

The University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) in Bénin was admitted as the CPP Non-Host

Degree Awarding University, while the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB) in Côte d'Ivoire graduated into CPP Host Degree Awarding University. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities was signed in May 2022. The other Host Degree Awarding university in the Francophone countries was the University of Yaoundé II in Cameroon.

35

It stipulates in the period 2020–2025 to have a total of 35 universities (15 Collaborative Masters Programme (CMAP), 9 Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) and 11 Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP)) to have the capacity to offer master's and PhD programmes, respectively.

The Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD), Sénégal was earmarked for admission into CPP Non-host Degree-Awarding universities. The Academic Advisory Board Ad-hoc Committee on Review and Maturation of CPP universities, accompanied by a team from the AERC, visited the university from August 25-26, 2022, to evaluate the university's preparedness to join CPP as a Non-Host Degree Awarding University. The findings of the monitoring and evaluation mission were tabled before the Academic Advisory Board meeting in March 2023 and thereafter forwarded to the Executive Director for final consideration and approval. Also, under consideration for admission into CPP, a Degree-Awarding University as well as a possible hosting facility for the CMAP and CPP Joint Facility for Electives (JFE) was the University of Pretoria. This would increase the total number of CPP Degree Awarding Universities to 11.

AERC-CMAAE Accreditation Committee Visits Stellenbosch University and University of Eswatini

Four universities applied for accreditation to the Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) programme. Three of them; Stellenbosch University, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the University of Eswatini applied for Category “B” to admit and offer the programme, while one, University of Buea, Cameroon, applied to be admitted into Category “A”.

Two monitoring and evaluation missions were undertaken between 24th October and 1st November, 2022, at the Stellenbosch University and the University of Eswatini to assess their preparedness to become accredited universities offering the CMAAE programme.

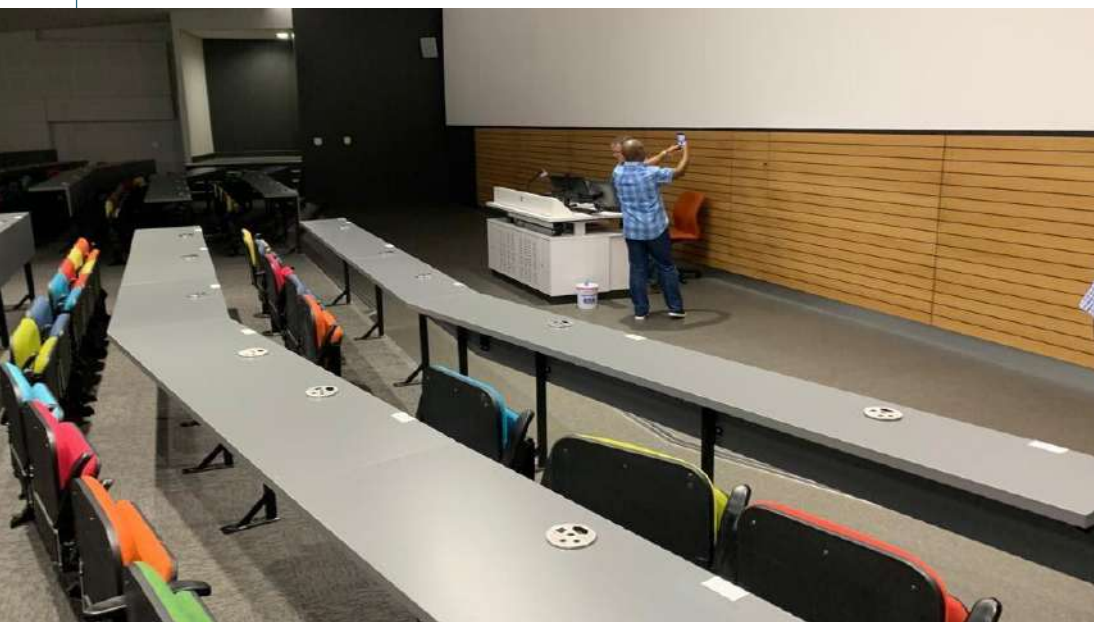
Led by the AERC Director of Training, Prof. Théophile Azomahou, the CMAAE Curriculum and Accreditation sub-Committee (CASC) conducted an evaluation for the accreditation mission in Stellenbosch University and the University of Eswatini between October 24 and November 2, 2022. The director was accompanied by Dr. Kennedy Machira, the Head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), who is also the Chairman of the CMAAE Academic Advisory Board. Also accompanying the director were Dr. Jonathan Nzuma, the Head of Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi, and member of the CASC, and Dr. Mark Korir, Manager Training at the AERC, who serves as the Secretary to the Committee. They were supported by Ms. Evar Kiambuthi, the Lead Programme Administrator, AERC and Mr. Paul Mburu, the Programme Administrator responsible for the CMAAE Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) and the CMAP/ CPP Joint Facility for Electives (JFE).



Led by the AERC Director of Training, Prof. Théophile Azomahou, the CMAAE Curriculum and Accreditation sub-Committee (CASC) conducted an evaluation for accreditation mission in Stellenbosch University and the University of Eswatini between October 24 and November 2, 2022.

The Accreditation Team (L to R): Dr. Korir, Prof. Azomahou, Dr. Nzuma, Ms. Kiambuthi, Dr. Machira & Mr. Mburu

The visits were in response to the applications by Stellenbosch University and the University of Eswatini for accreditation to admit students and offer the Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) degree programme.



A lecture theatre at Stellenbosch University

At Stellenbosch University, the team was flanked by Prof. Sibusiso Moyo, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, Prof. Danie Brink, the Dean, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Prof. Andre Jooste, the incoming Head of Department of Agricultural Economics, and Dr. Mellissa van der Merwe, Lecturer at the Department of Agricultural Economics, among other lecturers and professors.

Prof. D. Brink, Dr. Van der Merwe, and the accreditation team

At the University of Eswatini, the team was hosted by Prof. Justice M. Thwala, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Tendakayi H. Gadaga, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Prof. Absalom M. Manyatsi, the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, and Dr. Sotja Graham Dlamini, the Head of Department of Agricultural Economics and Management.



Exchange of Aide Memoirs (L to R): Dr. G.S. Dlamini, Dr. D. Dlamini, Prof. A. Manyatsi, and Dr. Korir

For both universities, the CASC developed aide memoirs documenting key findings and recommendations for follow up by the respective universities, and the AERC. The sub-committee also generated reports with recommendations for tabling in the CMAAE Academic Advisory Board for consideration.

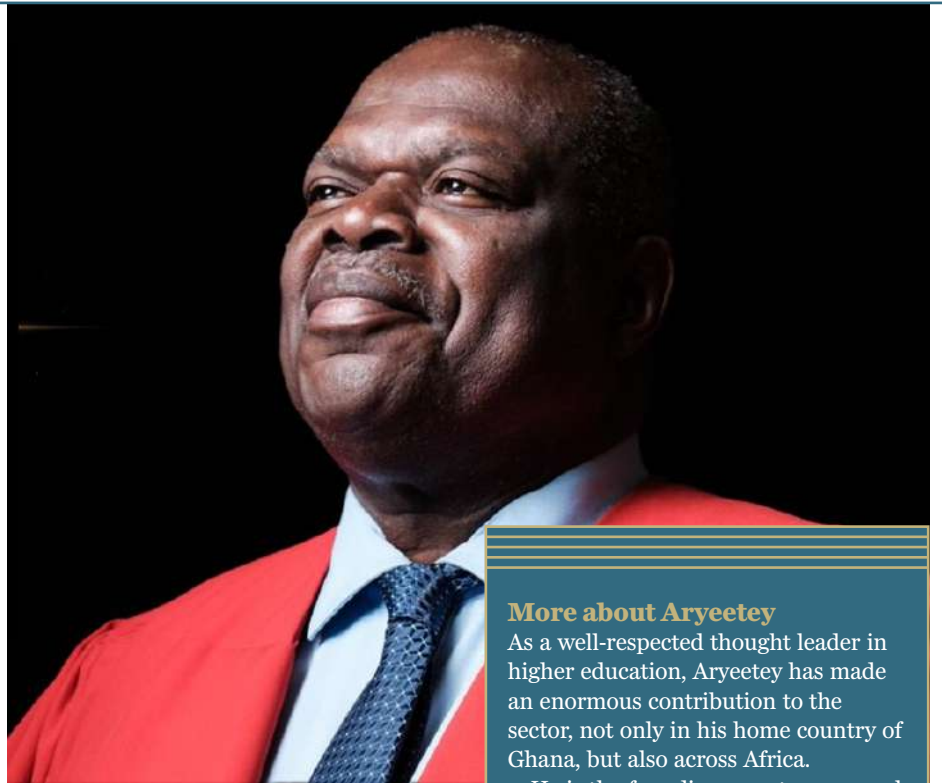
AERC's Board Chair, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, awarded an honorary doctorate from Stellenbosch University

Last year, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, the Board Chair, AERC, was awarded with an honorary doctorate from Stellenbosch University.

Stellenbosch University (SU) bestowed an honorary doctorate on one of Africa's giants in higher education, Prof Ernest Aryeetey, at its December graduation. He received the degree Doctor of Commerce (DCom), *honoris causa*, on Thursday, December 8, 2022, at an in-person graduation ceremony for the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences.

Prof Aryeetey, who hails from Ghana, was honoured for his discerning and innovative leadership in the higher education sector in Africa, his commitment to creating platforms to build research and innovation capacity on the continent and for sharing his expertise through his scholarly contributions.

In his acceptance speech, Prof. Aryeetey thanked SU for the honorary degree, highlighting its significance. "I'm very



much touched by the gesture and I'm very happy for the recognition of the work that we are all doing together in this region. I believe the importance of it will resonate around the region," he said.

Prpf. Aryeetey referred to the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and emphasised the important role of higher education institutions in addressing the challenges Africa faces.

"We strongly believe that in order to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa needs to change the way it manages its economies. The only way you can do this change is by building the knowledge systems you require for that, and also using these more effectively." He lauded SU for contributing much more to ARUA than was expected at the beginning.

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More about Aryeetey

As a well-respected thought leader in higher education, Aryeetey has made an enormous contribution to the sector, not only in his home country of Ghana, but also across Africa.

He is the founding secretary-general of the ARUA, a network of universities that focuses on building research capacity on the continent. Following its establishment, he spearheaded the identification of 13 research areas to facilitate interdisciplinary research collaborations and established 11 ARUA centres of excellence. This includes the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Energy at SU.

A professor of economics and former vice-chancellor of the University of Ghana (2010–2016), Aryeetey has held academic appointments at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) and at Yale University and Swarthmore College (both in the United States). His research focuses on the economics of development, and he is well known for his work on informal and microfinance in Africa.

Aryeetey is a member of the governing council of the United Nations University (UNU) and a former chair of the advisory board of the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (Helsinki).

Note of Congratulations to Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u on Appointment as Kenya's Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury & Economic Planning

**From the AERC Programme Committee
Prof. John Mukum Mbaku**

On behalf of the African Economic Research Consortium's Programme Committee (AERC PC), I extend my warmest congratulations to you on your appointment as the Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Economic Planning, Kenya. It has been a pleasure for us, members of the Programme Committee (PC), to watch your professional growth and your many contributions to capacity building in Africa. The AERC PC members wish you the best on this important next step in your stellar and exemplary career and pray that you continue to positively impact economic growth and human development, not just in Kenya, but also throughout the continent.

We, of the AERC PC, are confident that your leadership of Kenya's National Treasury and Economic Planning will help the ministry play a constructive and transformative role in economic growth, wealth creation, poverty alleviation, and human development in Kenya. We know that Africa is facing a number of critical challenges. Among them, are the need to mobilise enough resources to significantly improve healthcare access to all citizens and confront other critical problems. These problems include access to education, especially for vulnerable groups (e.g., those living on the economic margins), access to clean water, inflation, food insecurity, burgeoning external debt, rising inequality, and climate change. I'm confident that I'm expressing the wishes of my colleagues on the AERC Programme Committee when I wish you the very best in leading Kenya to financial stability and economic prosperity. I pray that your tenure as Kenya's Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Economic Planning, is marked by significant improvements in living standards, especially for those living in extreme poverty. Further, I'm confident that you will use the expertise and wealth of knowledge that you have acquired through prior service as an economics professor, Principal Researcher at the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and



Analysis (KIPPRA), and AERC Director of Training, and Governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, to help Kenya build a better and prosperous future for all its citizens.

At KIPPRA, AERC and the Central Bank of Kenya, your leadership was characterised by empathy, particularly for fellow citizens living on the economic margins—those in the rural areas and urban periphery, who struggle on a daily basis to meet their basic needs. Throughout your career, you have worked hard, not just to promote economic growth and development in Kenya, but most importantly, to make sure that growth is inclusive and provides opportunities for all citizens to benefit and improve

We, of the AERC PC, are confident that your leadership of Kenya's National Treasury and Economic Planning will help the ministry play a constructive and transformative role in economic growth, wealth creation, poverty alleviation, and human development in Kenya.

their quality of life. My prayer for you is that you use your new position to help humanise your fellow “public servants” and significantly enhance their ability to work for the improvement of the living standards of all Kenyans.

AERC is an institution that builds the capacity to inform economic policies in Africa. Since its establishment in 1988, AERC has worked hard to support “sound economic research on themes of importance to the management of economies in Africa.” I hope that we can continue the cooperation that AERC has had with the Government of Kenya in strengthening the AERC's longstanding research work and capacity building mandate, and providing Kenya with the expertise that it needs to promote sustainable economic growth and development.

It is undeniable that you have a well-established record of exemplary leadership in both public and private sectors. I first met you when you were a principal researcher at KIPPRA. Then, I worked with you as a Resource Person during your long tenure at AERC. I am confident that you are fully qualified to lead Kenya's National Treasury and Economic Planning and to help transform Kenya into one of the most developed and progressive economies in Africa. We, at the AERC hope that the mutually beneficial relationship that the Government of Kenya and the AERC have developed over the years will continue. Such a working partnership should significantly enhance Kenya's ability to develop its human resources, especially in economic policy making, and provide the AERC with opportunities to continue its capacity building.

We, at the AERC, appreciate the extraordinary service that you have given to the AERC, first as Director of Training and then as Executive Director. We look forward to working with you as you serve the People of Kenya and help them build a more peaceful and prosperous nation.

While looking forward to our continued collaboration with the Government of Kenya, accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mgeni E. Msafiri: My CPP Experience

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

My name is Mgeni E. Msafiri a PhD (Economics) candidate at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I am in my third year of studies and currently working on a dissertation titled “Economic diplomacy, Foreign direct investment and Export Dynamics in Tanzania”. I am also working as Assistant Lecturer at a public university in Tanzania, University of Dodoma.

2. In detail how was your CPP experience?

Without a doubt, being part of the collaborative PhD programme (CPP) in Economics for sub-Saharan Africa was one of the toughest, yet most rewarding and confidence boosting academic challenge I have ever had. We did core courses and next the electives under the Joint facility for electives (JFE) which for us was conducted online. The fact that the courses are harmonized across nine public universities from seven sub-Saharan African countries was a relief that I had enrolled in the best programme. Both core and elective courses were well organised and very intensive. I recall studying for

Without doubt, being part of the collaborative PhD programme (CPP) in Economics for sub-Saharan Africa was one of the toughest, yet most rewarding and confidence boosting academic challenge I have ever had.



long hours, having sleepless nights, tight deadlines for assignments and generally an exhausting journey. Honestly, there was a time I felt that the load was too heavy for me to carry, but with firm determination, it turned out well at least for the first part of the coursework.

What made CPP more attractive was the opportunity to learn from different lecturers across the continent during the JFE. The group discussions with students from other participating universities, didn't only create friendships but also vast learning experiences. Another rewarding experience I had as a CPP student was participation in the Bi-annual conference in Nov-Dec 2022. I presented my PhD proposal and got very constructive comments from a great team of international resource persons which I believe are crucial in shaping my work towards becoming good publishable work.

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

I heard about the programme before completing my master's degree. Being in academia I learned from colleagues who were part of the programme at the University of Dar es Salaam how competitive and well-structured it is. So, in 2020 I applied for admission into the University of Dar es Salaam and then for an AERC scholarship afterwards.

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

My enthusiasm for learning new things and in different ways is what keeps me going in the academia. I not only get to meet and teach the students which is the best investment for the future generation and the country as a whole, but I also get the opportunity to participate in research

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and consultancy activities which are great avenues for learning and contributing to policy debates in the country.

In the next five years, I see myself as a more vibrant economist and researcher who will be more than willing to remain in academia. I have a huge interest in economic modeling, specifically general equilibrium, partial equilibrium and trade policy modeling, which makes my everyday stay in academia exciting. In addition, the academic field offers the flexibility of working and carrying other life activities in a very convenient way.

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

Balancing studying and other life commitments has been an interesting exercise especially as a wife and mother to young children. I always keep in mind that all these are my responsibilities and I have to do my best in every task that I have. So from the start, I knew that I had enrolled in a tough programme and I was determined to work really hard to complete my studies successfully. Apart from family, I made sure I reduced many other social engagements and put a clear focus on my studies and family issues only.

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

For students who aspire to be part of the CMAAE/ CPP/CMAP programmes in the near future, I would say learning experiences are personal but being part of a CPP programme is worth it. It is a sure way to become an expert in a targeted field of interest in economics. There will be times when the programme will make you feel isolated, confused and exhausted, but just being accepted into this programme should give you the confidence to attain great heights in the economics field.

Balancing between studying and other life commitments has been an interesting exercise especially as a wife and mother to young children. I always keep in mind that all these are my responsibilities and I have to do my best in every task that I have.



Rodrick Raphael Mbirizi: My CMAAE Experience

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

My name is Rodrick Raphael Mbirizi. I'm pursuing a MSc degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics, and I'm in my second year at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Apart from School, I'm a Civil Servant working as a Farm Business Management Officer or Agribusiness Officer, under the Ministry of Agriculture in Blantyre District.

2. In detail, how was your CMAAE experience?

One thing that I had been looking forward to since my undergraduate studies, was to be part of the CMAAE Programme. Although we were not lucky to be physically present for our third semester at University of Pretoria due to Covid-19, the journey in the CMAAE Programme was full of great experiences and fun. Through the programme, I was able to link up with students from various universities such as the University of Nairobi, University of Zimbabwe and Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, just to mention a few. Through group assignments, presentations and most class work, I interacted and shared ideas with great minds from these top-notch universities, something I don't take for granted. Secondly, my interaction with lecturers from other universities increased my scope of understanding of various issues affecting our societies and how I, as an individual can be part of solutions to address economic challenges in my country.

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

I became part of the programme when I enrolled at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) in the 2021/2022 academic year. Upon successful completion of



the first and second semesters, I was enrolled in AERC's Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) hosted by University of Pretoria.

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

I'm always motivated by discoveries made by agricultural economists through various research works. As a student, it is my wish and dream to become

Through group assignments, group presentations and most class works, I interacted and shared ideas with great minds from these top-notch universities, something I don't take for granted.

one of the most decorated researchers in my country. God willing, it is my wish to pursue my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree soon after completing my Master of Science studies. As such, I see myself very active in academia in the next five years or more.

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

Frankly, this was one of the biggest challenges that I faced during the programme taking into account the fact that most of the classes were done virtually. More especially during the SFSE which was all virtual; self-discipline contributed to my success. In addition, proper planning and time management helped me to excel through the programme with reasonable grades.

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

My advice to them is that they should be focused and determined to achieve their goals. It is difficult, yes. But it's possible to do well despite a lot of personal and academic commitments.

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

Actually, it came as a surprise because I did not expect to be one of the top performers in the 2022 SFSE programme. So my recognition for exemplary performance was received with joy and excitement as it indicated that my hard work was not in vain. As I've already pointed out, I did not see myself emerging among the top students, but I thank God almighty for guiding and allowing me to be one of the best performers.

Opinion

African economies and overlapping crises: How to respond to the rising global headwinds

By Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u and Prof. Théophile T. Azomahou

The Covid-19 pandemic triggered a profound setback after a quarter-century of economic and social progress. Insecurity and political instability are becoming pervasive across Africa.

The Russian-Ukrainian war is exposing millions of people to food insecurity, and the most vulnerable are the hardest hit as a large share of their income goes to food and transport spending. This is compounded by a harsh drought in the Horn of Africa that has affected food supply and food security.

In parallel to these shocks that will likely have lasting consequences, African economies still suffer from several structural challenges including the effects of climate change.

9 million

As at the end of October 2022, the Covid-19 pandemic cost the lives of around 175,000 people, with more than nine million reported cases in the continent according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

As at the end of October 2022, the Covid-19 pandemic cost the lives of around 175,000 people, with more than nine million reported cases in the continent according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Thanks to effective policies and “good luck,” the health impact is lower than initially predicted. However, even though Africa is less affected compared to the other regions of the world, the economic impacts remain one of the highest. The real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by 1.8 percent in 2020—for the first time in more than 25 years—pushing 23 million people into extreme poverty according to the World Bank, exacerbating inequality, and shrinking fiscal space.

Africa’s Human Development Index also fell for the first time in nearly three decades. The recovery itself is dragged and uneven because of unequal access to vaccines and slow vaccination progress, protracted conflicts and political instabilities, and the Russian-Ukrainian war. GDP growth is expected to slow down in 2022 (3.7 percent) compared to 2021 (4.8 percent).

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) Global Terrorism Report 2022, six out of the 10 countries most impacted by terrorism in the world are in Africa. Four of the six deadliest countries are located in Africa (Mali, Niger, Somalia, and Burkina Faso) and they accounted for 77.3 percent of total terrorism deaths in 2021 (3,223 deaths).

This terrorist insecurity triggers political instability. Between 2020 and 2021, at least seven successful and one attempted coup were perpetrated in Africa (two in Burkina Faso, one in Chad, two in Mali, one in Guinea, one in Sudan, and one attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau). This political instability not only impedes economic recovery, but also sets back more than 30 years of democratic progress.

The Russian-Ukraine war further compounds the challenges to economic recovery. The war and subsequent economic sanctions against Russia increased energy prices, triggered food inflation, tightened financial conditions, and caused global

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Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u



Prof. Théophile T. Azomahou

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uncertainty. Brent oil price went above the \$100/barrel mark for the first time since 2014, creating a ripple effect on other prices and challenging the green energy transition.

Although the imports from Ukraine and Russia—as a share of Africa’s total imports—are small, many countries rely on these two countries for critical imports including wheat and fertilisers. For example, about 30 percent of Kenya’s imported wheat comes from Russia and Ukraine, and in 2021, 44 percent of Cameroon’s fertiliser imports came from Russia. As a result, 346 million people (a quarter of Africa’s total population) are facing severe food insecurity.

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In Kenya, the supply disruption and the increase in wheat price will affect the production and the price of bread, which is the third most consumed food item in the country.

Moreover, the pandemic and war in Ukraine have created a highly polarised world—unprecedented since the Cold War, which undermines the international community’s capability to come together and address the world’s most pressing issues. Under such circumstances, how can African policymakers properly navigate the multiple headwinds?

How African countries can deal with multiple headwinds

Addressing food insecurity diligently

Africa is home to 60 percent of the world’s uncultivated arable land. This contrasts sharply with the African continent’s incapacity to feed itself. In 2022, the African population will be equivalent to the Chinese and Indian populations. Figure 5 displays the historical evolution and projections of the population of Africa, China, and India based on the UN’s medium fertility scenario. As shown on the graph, Chinese and Indian populations reach a tipping point and will decrease over the coming years.

By contrast, the African population will continue to grow over the next eight decades. In less than 40 years, the African population is expected to be greater than the Chinese and Indian populations combined.

Feeding this population under climate change is one of the greatest challenges for Africa. Beyond the short-term emergency to address the threat of food insecurity caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war, African countries have an opportunity to draw lessons from this crisis and bring their agricultural sector up to par. This includes, but is not limited to, investing in supporting technologies, building fertiliser factories, and building climate resilience by investing in climate-smart agriculture and adaptation.

Food security and climate change should be developed into a strategic policy design. Education is also key to improving agricultural labor productivity. Failing to feed a young and fast-growing population can turn the expected demographic dividend into a demographic time bomb.

Fostering macroeconomic stability

The pandemic and the successive negative shocks dramatically deteriorated macroeconomic fundamentals in many African countries, particularly the sovereign debt balance. As of February 2022, 23, African countries were either in



debt distress or at risk of it. Fiscal space and sound macroeconomic conditions will be key to properly respond to the various shocks faced by African economies. Improving efficiency in public spending, and mobilising more domestic revenue by increasing tax administration efficiency, can contribute to building fiscal space and a sound macroeconomic framework, which is fundamental to sustaining economic recovery. However, achieving this (i.e., improving tax revenue collection and public spending efficiency) may entail structural reforms including technology adoption and fighting against corruption.

Inclusive and equitable recovery policies

Crises and recovery are uneven within and between countries. While the most vulnerable are hit the hardest, they also experience slower recovery than the others. To ensure that no one is left behind, recovery policies need to be inclusive and equitable. For instance, governments should pay attention to people falling into extreme poverty due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to those at risk of falling under the poverty line, and design policies that could help people to bounce back. Governments can also leverage digital financial services to improve access to finance for the most vulnerable population.

People’s vulnerability, political unrest, and political instability

Insecurity, vulnerability, and social unrest hinder political stability and development prospects. The current food insecurity and terrorism in the Sahel heighten the risk of social unrest on the continent. Governments need to take adequate measures to avoid setbacks in democratic progress. To support an inclusive recovery, governments should engage in reducing people’s vulnerability and developing social safety nets.

Food security and climate change should be developed into a strategic policy design. Education is also key to improving agricultural labor productivity. Failing to feed a young and fast-growing population can turn the expected demographic dividend into a demographic time bomb.

Thesis Dissemination Workshop, Eswatini

To share the best practices emanating from the CMAAE thesis research, a thesis dissemination workshop was held on November 15, 2022, at the Esibayeni Lodge, Matsapa, Eswatini.



Thesis dissemination workshop, Esibayeni Lodge, Matsapa, Eswatini.

A total of seven presentations were made to farmers, members of the academia, and Ministry of Agriculture officials, among other stakeholders. The occasion was graced by Prof. Justice M. Thwala, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Absalom Manyatsi, the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Eswatini.

Farmers Training, Eswatini



Farmers Training Workshop, Esibayeni Lodge, Matsapa, Eswatini.

The AERC-CMAAE continued to train farmers on entrepreneurship in agribusiness for the transformation of African agriculture from subsistence to commercialised agricultural enterprises. The training was held at Esibayeni Lodge, Matsapa, on November 16-18, 2022. The training was graced by Ms. Gugu Shabangu, the acting Principal, Ministry of Agriculture, Eswatini and the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Eswatini. The curriculum included concepts of good agricultural practices, farming as a business, record keeping, risk management in agricultural enterprises and credit management, among others. The training was concluded with farm visits to the University of Eswatini and a private farm where farmers were exposed to production of Irish potatoes, cabbage, corn, and seed beans.



Collaborative Research News

September 5-7, 2022

BMGF Human Capital Development (Individual & Institutional) CCS Inception Workshop (Virtual)

The AERC-Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) *project on Building Policy Research Institutions to Support Human Capital Development in Africa (HCD)* was implemented in partnership with Think Tanks from seven (7) sub-Saharan African countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Madagascar) and undertook 16 Country Case Studies towards reinforcing country level human capital policies. The Inception workshop was held virtually on September 5 & 6 for Institutional Researchers and September 7 & 8, 2022 for the Individual researchers with 16 papers for institutions and 11 papers for individuals being presented and recommended to proceed to work in progress upon incorporation of comments.

During the period September - December 2022, several programme activities were undertaken.

Collaborative Activities

September 8, 2022

Regional Policy Forum, AERC-ERF Disruptive Technologies Project (Hybrid), - Trademark Hotel Nairobi

The AERC- ERF-Disruptive Technologies project held a hybrid regional policy forum at Trademark Hotel, Nairobi on September 8 2022. Five policy briefs were developed and published and five papers from the project have been finalised and published as AERC working papers. The papers were presented at the regional policy forum which was attended by over 20 policymakers in person, and about 200 virtual participants.

October 12-14, 2022

BMGF Financial Inclusion and Market Development in EAC Economies Technical Training on Financial Inclusion – for individual and Institutional CCS (Physical in Kenya)

BMGF Financial Inclusion and Market Development in EAC Economies undertook a hybrid technical training for researchers after a call and shortlist. The training was on Policies and Regulations on Agent Banking, Digital Financial Services and a total of 31 researchers (seven women and 24 men) attended with 25 researchers attending in person and six virtually. It was held in Nairobi at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on October 12-14, 2022.

October 25, 2022

GPIR Team1 – Mid Review Workshop

The Mid Review meeting for the 1st cohort of the CCS phase for the NORAD funded Re-Examining the Growth, Poverty, Inequality and Redistribution Relationships in Africa project was held virtually on October 25, 2022, and 4 papers were presented with 1 researcher deferring their presentation as they were not ready.



October 17-19, 2022

BMGF Human Capital Development (Individual & Institutional) CCS – Technical Workshop

BMGF Human Capital Development in Africa Project undertook a hybrid technical training for researchers after a call and shortlist. The hybrid training was on Agent-Based Modeling of Educational and Social Systems and a total of 34 researchers (14 women and 20 men) attended with 26 researchers attending in person and eight virtually. It was held in Nairobi, Sarova Panafric Hotel on October 17-19, 2022.



October 27, 2022

Regional Policy Forum – IDRC -AERC-Financial Inclusion in FPC project

The AERC- IDRC-Inclusive finance in fragile and post conflict states Project held a regional policy forum at Trademark Hotel, Nairobi on October 27, with a view to informing policy on Africa's inclusive growth and realisation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (SDGs). Nine policy briefs were developed and published, and nine papers from the project have been finalised and published as AERC Working papers and were presented at the regional policy forum that was attended by over 50 policymakers, with Ms. Nnenna L. Nwabufu, Director General, East Africa Regional Development and Business Delivery Office, African Development Bank Group giving the keynote speech.

November 7-12, 2022

BMGF Financial Inclusion and Market Development in EAC Economies Back-to-back Mid Review Workshop for individual and Institutional CCS (Physical in Tanzania)

The AERC-BMGF- Digital Financial Services and Market Development in the East African Community Region (DFSP-EAC) project held its mid-review workshop for both Institutional and Individual Researchers in Dar es Salaam between 7-12 November 2022, on (Workshop Papers). Most researchers have been requested to work on additional comments and submit their work in progress by February 2023 before proceeding to Final reports, as per verdict.

November 10, 2022

South Africa in Country Dissemination (Wits) – Online

In collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand, School of Economics and Finance, AERC held a virtual dissemination workshop (webinar) on November 10 to disseminate findings of two research papers conducted under the AERC collaborative research programme - "Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA)" and "Covid-19 and Livelihoods in Africa".

This event was featured as part of Wits' centenary celebration for cutting edge research on important topics such as climate change and gender inequality. The webinar was attended by 18 people and was chaired by Prof. Prudence Magejo. To kick start discussions after the presentations, Prof. Miracle Benhura was the discussant of the paper presented by Dr Mosomi while Prof. Dambala Kutela was the discussant of the paper presented by Ms Conselho-Mwiinga.

AERC Round Up

November 14-18, 2022

BMGF Human Capital Development (Individual & Institutional) CCS – Mid Review Workshop (Physical -Kenya)

The AERC-Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) *project on Building Policy Research Institutions to Support Human Capital Development in Africa (HCD)* was implemented in partnership with Think Tanks from seven (7) sub-Saharan African countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Madagascar) and undertook 16 Country Case Studies towards reinforcing country level human capital policies. The Mid Review workshop for the Institutional and Individual Researchers was held at Sarova Panafric Hotel in Nairobi on November 15 and 16 and November 17 and 18, 2022, for the following participants(respectively), with 16 papers for institutions and 11 papers for individuals being presented and recommended to proceed to Final Report upon incorporation of comments as per verdict.

November 23-25, 2022

Regional Policy Forum for the AERC-Oxfam-IDRC project on “The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Livelihoods in Africa”

AERC in collaboration with OXFAM implemented the IDRC “**Impact of Covid-19 on Livelihoods in Africa**” Project. Oxfam, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) convened a High-Level Regional Policy Forum on “**the Gendered Impact of Covid-19 on Livelihoods in Africa**”. The meeting took place in hybrid format from 23rd -25th November 2022 at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The meeting brought together diverse partners including African Union representatives,

Representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Ministers from select Member States, feminist activists and academics, Women’s Rights Organisations (WROs) and Civil Society Organisations. During the conference, Two AERC researchers were given the opportunity to present their research findings. Two AERC consultants engaged in the AERC-IDRC-OXFAM End of Project Evaluation (Dr Josiah Ateka and Dr Forah Obebo) participated in this event, based on their roles as consultants. AERC leadership was represented by Dr. Mark Korir who gave opening remarks while Oxfam Pan Africa Director Peter Kamalingin gave opening remarks on behalf of Oxfam.



Modernisation of AERC's Digital Ecosystem

Organisations are facing digital disruptions that are accelerating changes in people, processes, and technology.

Recently, companies heavily reliant on technology have been undergoing a modernisation life cycle in ensuring that they continue to create value and suffice to the constantly evolving expectations of their stakeholders. AERC in its capacity to continue impacting economic policy within sub-Saharan Africa has been at the forefront in ensuring that IT interfacing platforms are enablers through innovation and modernisation.

AERC's 2020-2025 strategy highlighted the need to modernise the organisation's ageing platforms. Like any other organization, whose core business objectives are necessitated by Information Technology (IT) AERC has been on a journey to modernise its infrastructure, applications, and security platforms. The motivation behind modernisation is to ensure that AERC's IT platforms will continue being sustainable, that systems availability will be at anytime from anywhere in the world and that information within these systems will maintain integrity and confidentiality.

The incremental upgrades and/or modernisations have been informed by the need to improve on efficiency in AERC's systems operations, enhanced cybersecurity, and data protection as well as to increase collaboration and communication capabilities within the organization network.

The AERC ICT team response to new user demands and system features has been central to offering value to the organisation in its processes and journey to achieving its strategic objectives. The ICT team has embarked on upgrading various aspects of the IT ecosystem; this includes, upgrade of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and Research Management System (RMS), implementation of an automated extended detection and response system and key to success of these projects has been the modernisation of our server, network, and power infrastructure.

The incremental upgrades and/or modernisations have been informed by the need to improve on efficiency in AERC's systems operations, enhanced cybersecurity, and data protection as well as to increase collaboration and communication capabilities within the organisation network. The benefits of AERC's modernisation will translate to increased productivity and value among AERC's staff and external stakeholders, flexible and scalable systems with improved features, secure systems, and operational infrastructure as well as efficiency in use of systems.

As technology changes and stakeholders' needs grow, AERC IT team is also on a lookout for innovative solutions and knowledge build up to ensure that the organisation remains ahead of its peers, and that it is globally placed in IT utilisation and innovation. Today's cup of IT coffee seems to grow bigger and the caffeine consisting of AI, blockchain, IOT and others are waiting for a sip from AERC.

AERC Round Up



The CMAAE Academic Advisory Board, January 30-31, 2023

AERC-CMAAE Academic Advisory Board Meeting, Kampala, Uganda

The CMAAE Academic Advisory Board held its meeting at the Protea by Marriot Hotel, Kampala, Uganda on January 30-31, 2023, to perform the quality assurance role of the Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics programme.

The CMAAE Academic Advisory Board held its meeting at the Protea by Marriot Hotel,

Kampala, Uganda on 30-31 January 2023 to perform the quality assurance role of the Collaborative Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics programme. Graced by the Ag. Executive Director, AERC, Prof. Théophile Azomahou, and chaired by Prof. Kennedy Machira (Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources) the meeting was attended by the Heads of the Departments of Agricultural Economics from

17 public universities in the eastern and southern Africa region (Photograph 1). The agenda was to consider the examinations for the Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) 2022 and the accreditation of departments to offer the CMAAE programme, among other items. Two universities, the University of eSwatini (eSwatini) and Stellenbosch University (South Africa) were recommended for accreditation.

Thesis Dissemination Workshop for Makerere Graduates

A thesis dissemination workshop was held for Makerere University graduates to share their thesis research findings with stakeholders on February 1, 2023, at the Marriot Hotel, Kampala, Uganda. The stakeholders included farmers, Ministry of Agriculture officials, academia, and research institutions. The workshop, whose theme was “Technology Adoption for Improved Livelihoods in Uganda” was graced by the Ag. Executive Director, AERC, Prof. Théophile Azomahou and had a total of eight presentations.



Thesis Dissemination Workshop, Kampala, Uganda- February 1, 2023



Farmers Training, February 2-3, 2023, Kampala, Uganda

Farmers Training Uganda

A farmers training was held on February 2-3, 2023, at the Marriot Hotel, Kampala, Uganda, with the aim of imparting knowledge on entrepreneurship in agribusiness. The meeting was graced by Dr. Dick Kamuganga, the President of the Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE). Drawn from all regions of Uganda, the farmers were taken through concepts of farming as a business, financing agribusiness, credit management, and risk management among other subjects. Several farmers displayed their products including honey, precooked beans, processed cassava and the orange-fleshed sweet potato.

Off the press New AERC books and other publications

Publication 1 - Climate-Smart Agriculture, Welfare, and Income Risk Management in Ethiopia

Author

Yitbarek, Eleni
Tesfaye, Wondimagegn

Publication Summary

Despite significant gains in poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa, rural poverty remains a concern in the region. The agriculture sector in the region continues to underperform because farmers rely on unsustainable farming practices that lead to land degradation and poor soil fertility. Moreover, climate change appears to be a major source of risk for agricultural production. One option for sustainable agricultural production is “climate-smart” agricultural practices that support production and enhance adaptive capacity. Thus, it is important to establish this link of substitutability or complementarity of different livelihood options for farmers such as adopting CSA and other income risk management strategies such as migration and off-farm employment, scaling up CSA practices or promoting off-farm employment to improve farmers’ resilience against the effect of climate change. This publication therefore provides insight into the link between CSA and household welfare and income risk management in SSA using data from a low-income country context using Ethiopia as a case.

Key messages

- Adoption of CSA can significantly increase the welfare and risk management capacity of rural households.
- Impact of combining CSA and off farm income guarantees better income risk management and lowers poverty (both monetary and multidimensional) compared to the case where a household is not practicing CSA.
- However, policies that seek to leverage the welfare benefits of CSA need to acknowledge the capacity of households in adoption CSA and non-farm strategies.

Read more: http://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/3491/CCEDA-004_Ethiopia.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Publication 2 - Extreme Climate Events and Conflicts in the G5 Sahel Countries

Author

Ouédraogo, Mahamady

Publication Summary

Climate change affects population and economic activities dynamics and thereby puts additional pressure on scarce resources. These dynamics have the potential to trigger conflicts or exacerbate the existing ones. According to Homer-Dixon (1999), arid regions in Africa, in particular, are prone to ‘scarcity-induced conflicts. This publication aims to share insights on climate and conflicts nexus with a specific focus on the G5-Sahel countries. The G5 Sahel countries are trapped in a complex socio-political environment and multiple factors may contribute to conflicts. Isolating the contribution of each factor is critical to designing and implementing conflict mitigation and peace-building policies. The G5-Sahel country members (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad) are experiencing both an increase in conflicts and extreme climate events in terms of occurrence, and intensity reinforcing the suspicion about any association.

Key messages

- The occurrence and intensity of both extreme climate events and conflicts are increasing in G5 Sahel countries.
- This has led to a contentious debate among scholars about any association between climate events and conflicts.
- The difference in conflicts and climate variables and data sources may explain a large part of the controversy in the literature.
- Extreme climate events increase the risk of social conflicts by 9% the same year and 13% the next year.
- Extreme climate events are associated with spontaneous social unrest rather than armed and organised conflicts in the Sahel.

Read more: http://publication.aercafricalibrary.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/3492/CCEDA-005_G5%20Sahel%20Countries.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

AERC Round Up



Upcoming events

Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society 2023

High panel discussion for Adam Smith's Tercentenary on the side-lines of the AFES 2023 in Nairobi.

Date: June 1st – 3rd, 2023

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

2023 AFRICA MEETING OF THE ECONOMETRIC SOCIETY AERC, NAIROBI JUNE 1-3, 2023

 ESTHER DUFILO MIT, CHELSEA ECONOMIC PRESS IN ECONOMIC SCIENCES IN HARVARD IN APRIL 2022	 JAMES ROBINSON UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO	 ERNEST ARYEETAY THE FRANK RICHARDS SCHOOL FOR LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	 ROSA MATZKIN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
 KEVIN CHIKA URAMA AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	 NATHAN NUNN MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	 LEONARD WANTCHEKON PRINCETON UNIVERSITY	 DARON ACEMOGLU (MIT)



Strengthening relationships in the workplace

In September 2022, all staff members participated in a personal development course, Insights, facilitated by Raiser Resource Group. The AERC brought on board new staff during the Covid-19 season and due to travel and in-person events restrictions, there had not been any staff events. The course's intention was to help staff build and understand each other's personalities, strengths, working styles and preferences in an effort to promote inter and intra departmental synergies. The sessions were informative and rewarding which contributed to building strong relationship bonds at work. This session was complemented by fun, outdoor activities facilitated by Blaze Consulting Ltd where learning was transferred into games and activities that made the learning sessions impactful.

End of Year staff get-together

In December 2022, the AERC had an end of year get-together with all team members present. It was an opportunity to usher the holiday season collectively as well as celebrate the achievements during the year, highlight wins and strides made. It was also an opportunity to celebrate staff with outstanding attributes. It was a fun-filled event which was enjoyed by all.



Long service award



We celebrated Jackson Ng'ang'a who has served the AERC for 20 years as an Office Assistant/ Driver. He is a valued member of the AERC team, and we appreciate his years of service to the institution.



57th AERC Biannual Workshop Video

African economies have been urged to include food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation framework in the economic agenda. This was said during the 57th AERC Biannual Research Workshop. Find more highlights from the workshop here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-l8vKEHX9A>

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