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ACEIR
AFRICAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
FOR INEQUALITY RESEARCH



ARUA
African Research
Universities Alliance



Leading African research in overcoming inequality



ACEIR is a research centre of the African Research Universities Alliance and is hosted by the University of Cape Town. With country partners in eastern, western and southern Africa, we aim to contribute to deep, multidimensional and interdisciplinary understandings of inequality in each country context, and a continental and global understanding of how inequalities can be overcome.



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ACEIR NEWS BULLETIN

March 2025

This year the annual Group of 20 meeting will take place in Africa for the first time. As the host, the Government of South Africa is on record that it will focus its G20 Presidency on issues pertinent to Africa.

To identify key priorities for the continent's development that will feed into the G20 process, an Africa Expert Panel was appointed a few weeks ago by South Africa's Minister of Finance.

We are very proud of our director, Prof. Murray Leibbrandt, who is one of the 23 Africa experts appointed to this panel. Prof. Leibbrandt is the UCT Research Chair in Poverty and Inequality Research and former director of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town.

We wish him and fellow panellists well for this important assignment.

This first bulletin of 2025 shows the year has started at a double pace for our teams – and with crossing several milestones and setting new ones.

These include the release of a new book on African inequalities based on research by ACEIR and partners' researchers, and a consultative workshop on findings from a new inequality diagnostic country report.

Several of our teams met to workshop the progress of collaborations with research partners. These include an international study on the influence of politician characteristics and networks on wealth reproduction through policy making; the consequences of Ghana's free schooling policies as part of an international research programme on gender, growth and labour markets in low-income countries; and a new book on the racial wealth divide in Britain and South Africa.

Also read about a new working paper on distributional impacts of global food price shocks in South Africa, which is part of a series of UNU-WIDER papers on the Russian–Ukraine conflict. We share recordings of recent events where ACEIR researchers participated; and highlight forthcoming events, including a policy dialogue on the urgent need to address the inequalities on the African continent – a side event of a SALDRU conference on South Africa's 30 years of democracy this week.

NEWS | New book on African inequalities challenges policy makers

AFRICA DEVELOPMENT FORUM



A new publication by the World Bank and Agence Française de Développement calls for progressive policies that can reduce inequalities in Africa to speed up poverty reduction and economic growth on the continent. The book, *Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa: Multidimensional Perspectives and Future Challenges*, draws on research and analyses by ACEIR and partner researchers. The book was launched on a webinar in January and is available online in English and French as well as Kiswahili and isiXhosa summaries.

[Read more](#)

NEWS | Tackling inequality for sustainable growth and poverty reduction in Africa



A policy dialogue this week is set to build on discussions at the launch of *Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa: Multidimensional Perspectives and Future Challenges*. The gathering on 1 April 2025 will serve as a platform to consolidate and discuss the critical discourse on the urgency to tackle wealth divides by offering fresh insights and evidence on the enduring presence of inequalities in Africa. The dialogue is co-hosted with Agence Française de Développement and will take place on the fringe of a conference on 'South Africa at 30 Years of Democracy' hosted by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town, and other partners. The dialogue will be livestreamed. [Read more](#)

NEWS | Workshop to consult on inequality in the Namibian labour market



An ACEIR team has presented findings from a new inequality diagnostic report to key government, business, trade union and civil society stakeholders at a consultative workshop co-hosted with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Windhoek. Researchers at the South Africa node have been working on this study since 2024 as one of several ILO pilots in different countries to develop comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks to reduce and prevent inequities in the workplace. [Read more](#)

NEWS | Annual network meeting of the Politicians, Policies, and the Reproduction of Wealth (PoWER) project



ACEIR hosted an annual research workshop in the first week of March 2025 as part of the ongoing Politicians, Policies, and the Reproduction of Wealth (PoWER) project. The project, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, examines how politician characteristics influence wealth reproduction through policy making. While the research and analyses are still in nascent stages, some interesting emergent results were presented at the workshop. [Read more](#)

NEWS | Forthcoming book on the racial wealth divide in Britain and South Africa



Photo: Marsel Minga on Flickr.

Researchers from ACEIR's South Africa node are contributors to an exciting and innovative forthcoming book that focuses on the huge wealth divides between racial groups and how these can be challenged. The project is led by research partners at the International Inequalities Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and the book will be published by the LSE Press in 2026. [Read more](#)

NEWS | Stakeholder engagements in Ghana for gender, growth and labour markets project



Photo: Robert Osei (ACEIR and University of Ghana), Emma Whitelaw (SALDRU), Samuel Annim (Government Statistician) and Nicola Branson (SALDRU) at the Ghana Statistical Service.

Members of the Ghana and South Africa research nodes earlier this month conducted stakeholder engagements for their project on educational expansion in Ghana. This as Prof. Nicola Branson and Dr Emma Whitelaw from SALDRU visited Prof. Robert D. Osei in Accra for a series of meetings with groups relevant to their [study of the consequences of Ghana's free education policies](#). The meetings included interactions with the head of the policy and planning unit at the Ministry of Education, the Government Statistician at the Ghana Statistical Service, and colleagues at the Ghana node host, the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana. They also visited public primary, junior high and senior high schools to better understand the implementation of the country's free education policies in practice. Their trip was combined with an ISSER-hosted workshop with colleagues from ACEIR and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

NEWS | Appointment to G20 Africa Expert Panel

ACEIR director, Prof. Murray Leibbrandt, has been assigned to the newly established Africa Experts Panel tasked with advising the Minister of Finance during South Africa's Presidency of the G20 this year. The appointment is yet another affirmation of his life-long commitment to a prosperous continent that can take its rightful place on the world stage. Prof. Leibbrandt says his appointment presents an opportunity to leverage existing research and the African research community in addressing key policy issues. A media statement by South Africa's National Treasury says the panel will be driven by evidence-based dialogue and the development of strategic policy directions that will culminate in a High-Level Report with key recommendations. [Read more](#)

CAPACITY BUILDING | Starting UNU-WIDER Visiting PhD Fellowship Programme

Chandré Jacobs will spend the coming months in Helsinki, Finland, as a visiting doctoral student at the World Institute for Development Economics Research, which is part of the United Nations University. The fellowship provides opportunities to utilise the resources and facilities at UNU-WIDER for her PhD research and work with the research mentors. This year the PhD fellows will do poster presentations at the WIDER conference in Helsinki in June 2025. Chandré is based at SALDRU, University of Cape Town. Her research interests are inequality and conflict, specifically local inequality, protest action and communal violence in South Africa.



Nurturing the growth of young and emerging African researchers

One of the central pillars of ACEIR's work is to contribute to research and data capacity development that advances a strong research programme on developing strategies that address inequality and poverty in Africa. Partnerships with Africa's only internationally certified data repository, scholars at other universities, international development agencies, and national statistical offices make it possible to offer different components of capacity development for postgraduate students, early career researchers, and key players from government and civil society. A new section on the ACEIR website provides insights into the capacity building initiatives to date. [Visit website](#)

NEW PUBLICATIONS | Chapters in books

[Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa: Multidimensional Perspectives and Future Challenges](#)

Edited by Anda David, Murray Leibbrandt, Vimal Ranchhod, Rawane Yasser, 2025

The growing disparity between the rich and poor remains one of the critical challenges of recent decades, affecting countries across all continents, irrespective of their gross domestic product per capita. This widening gap not only impedes efforts to eradicate extreme poverty but also hinders progress toward social justice and resilience-building. Rising inequalities pose substantial barriers to sustainable development, and it is within this context that this book contributes to ongoing debates, offering a comprehensive analysis of the current challenges and future perspectives of inequality on the African continent.

This is the 14th title in the Africa Development Forum Series that is co-published by the World Bank and Agence Française de Développement. Thirteen researchers from ACEIR's country nodes in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa have contributed to the total of 11 chapters:

1. Overview of Inequalities in Africa: Anda David, Rocco Zizzamia, **Murray Leibbrandt**, Rawane Yasser, **Vimal Ranchhod**
2. Measurement of Inequality: **Muna Shifa**, **Richmond Atta-Ankomah**, **Samuel Kipruto**
3. Inequalities in Education and Health: **Monica Lambon-Quayefio**, **Vimal Ranchhod**, **Nkechi Owoo**, **Moses Muriithi**, Linda Zanfini, **Reuben Mutegi**, **Germano Mwabu**
4. Labor Market Inequalities: **Vimal Ranchhod**, Anda David, **Damiano K. Manda**, Cecilia Poggi, Claire Zanuso, Rawane Yasser
5. Gender Inequalities: **Abena D. Oduro**, Serge Rabier, Jacqueline Mosomi, Rawane Yasser
6. Spatial Inequality – Multidimensional Inequalities across Space: **Nkechi Owoo**, **Muna Shifa**, **Vimal Ranchhod**, Mary Zhang
7. Migration and Inequality: Anda David, **Murray Leibbrandt**, **Muna Shifa**, Rawane Yasser
8. Social Mobility and the Persistence of Inequality: **Murray Leibbrandt**, Rawane Yasser, **Robert Osei**, Mike Savage
9. Policies to Tackle Inequality in Africa: **Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón**, Annalena Oppel, **Murray Leibbrandt**, Mike Savage, Anda David
10. Climate Change, Poverty Reduction, and Inequality between and within Countries: Anda David, **Murray Leibbrandt**, Hélène Djoufelkit, Rawane Yasser
11. Sustainability and Patterns of Economic Growth: Rawane Yasser, **Murray Leibbrandt**, Anda David, **Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón**, Hélène Djoufelkit

NEW PUBLICATIONS | Working paper

[Distributional impacts of global food price shocks in South Africa: Case of Russian–Ukraine conflict](#)

Faiqa Hartley & **Sherwin Gabriel**

WIDER Working Paper 2024/81, 2024.

The revival of the sociology of elites since c.2008

ISSER GRADUATES (Unverified)

Mike Savage, esteemed British sociologist and academic specialising in social class, presented at a seminar hosted by ACEIR's Ghana research node at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana. Prof. Savage (LSE) introduced early findings from the World Elite Database – the most-systematic research to date that seeks to provide a comparative platform for the study of elites. Dr Rebecca Simson (University of Oxford) joined him to present a study on 'Elite persistence in Africa: Historical perspectives, state of knowledge and the path forward'. The seminar was part of ISSER's series of seminars. [Watch the recording](#)

CATCH UP | Webinar to launch 'Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa: Multidimensional Perspectives and Future Challenges'



Researchers and practitioners from the AFD, the World Bank, ACEIR, and Oxfam participated in this webinar that announced the release of this book. Highlights included reflections on some of the key findings from the report by the lead editor, Dr Anda David (AFD), and co-editor Prof. Vimal Ranchhod (ACEIR, University of Cape Town). They were joined in response by Oxfam Africa director, Fati N'Zi-Hassane and the World Bank's Chief Economist for Africa, Dr Andrew Dabalen. [Watch recording](#)

OUR FOOTPRINT



Inaugural Lecture of the IV National Esapista Chair

Dr Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón was invited to give the Guillermo Nannetti Concha and the II Chair for Peace: Restorative Justice and Territorial Peace inaugural lecture in February at Colombia's Public Service School (Escuela Superior de Administración Pública de Colombia). The lecture was titled 'The challenges of the rainbow nation: Lessons from South African transitional justice for the Colombian case' and reflected on the challenges of making socio-economic transformation and inequalities a reality against the promises of transitional contexts. [Watch recording](#)

1st Meeting of the Network of Universities for the Analysis of Ethnic-Racial Inequalities

Dr Díaz Pabón also attended the First Meeting of the Network of Universities for the Analysis of Ethnic-Racial Inequalities at the ICESI University in Cali, a space for the exchange of knowledge between researchers to enhance research in the region. The event was organised by the Pacifico Task Force and the Centro de Estudios Afrodiasporicos (CEAF) of the ICESI university. The event was attended by 15 university professors from Cauca, Chocó, Valle del Cauca and Nariño (from Colombia). Dr Díaz Pabón presented an overview of ACEIR work.

IN THE NEWS

South Africa's G20 Presidency: New high level panel to tackle Africa debt crisis
IOL, 13 March 2025

South Africa launches Africa Expert Panel as part of its G20 presidency
Creamer Media Engineering News, 12 March 2025



Forward



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