



ACEIR
AFRICAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
FOR INEQUALITY RESEARCH



ARUA
African Research
Universities Alliance



ACEIR is a research centre of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) that is hosted by the University of Cape Town. With country partners in eastern, western and southern Africa, ACEIR aims 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

Third quarter of 2023

The past three months' activities captured in this news bulletin are illustrative of yet another busy and productive quarter for ACEIR and our research teams.

One highlight has been preparing for the “Inequality, Work, and Nature: Strategic Dilemmas & Policy Resolution” conference early in November. ACEIR’s hub at the University of Cape Town is co-hosting this two-day high-profile international conference with our long-term partner, the Agence Française de Développement, the European Union, and the South African Presidency.

The first day will showcase research on the strategic dilemmas encountered when designing long-term development trajectories that are both ecologically and socially sustainable. The second day gathers high-level government officials and practitioners from especially the Global South to consider and discuss policies that deal with inequality and environmental change and how these can shape the development of emerging economies. Registration for in-person attendance is open until 26 October, including four side events on the fringe of the conference.

Another highlight has been the opportunity to present ACEIR’s climate vulnerability research at the global Science Summit 2023 during the recent 79th gathering of the United Nations General Assembly.

News from the ACEIR research nodes is that members of the Ghana team have facilitated a capacity building workshop for civil society organisations as part of an Oxfam project that advocates for measuring the redistributive impact of fiscal policy. This follows an ACEIR Ghana study on the extent to which taxes, government subsidies, and social spending affect poverty and inequality in that country.

Our South Africa node has hosted a session at the Economics Society of South Africa’s Biennial Conference where members of the team presented several papers. One of these, on “The socio-economic dimensions of racial inequality in South Africa: A social space perspective”, has now been published as an ACEIR working paper.

In Kenya, one of this year’s recipients of the ARUA Early Career Research Fellowships has joined the ACEIR Kenya node for a year. Dr Raymond E. Kofinti, who hails from Ghana, will collaborate with members from the Kenya team on four studies about African inequalities in consumption and formal healthcare utilisation.

In looking ahead, we’re excited to announce that ACEIR is teaming up with the University of Bremen’s International Graduate School of Social Sciences to host one of their Schools in Computational Social Science and Data Science in 2024. The organisers are currently inviting applications from experts and project leaders to be part of the School’s programme, while enrolment for this capacity building event will commence at the end of this year.

We also invite you to dip into the list of new publications by ACEIR researchers, including three working papers that were published by the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER).

NEWS | Join us for the Inequality, Work, and Nature conference, 8 – 9 November (hybrid)



INEQUALITY, WORK AND NATURE

Strategic Dilemmas
and Policy Resolution

#ResearchInequalities
#TeamEurope



November
8-9
2023

University of Cape Town,
South Africa

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Registration for in-person attendance of the conference on “Inequality, Work, and Nature: Strategic Dilemmas & Policy Resolution” is open until 26 October. Taking place in Cape Town, South Africa, the event is a collaboration between the European Union, the Agence Française de Développement, the South African Presidency, and ACEIR’s hub that is hosted by the University of Cape Town. The gathering will bring together policymakers, researchers, and international development agencies to discuss how the trade-offs between inequality and environmental change are shaping the development pathways of emerging economies – and how to build consensus and make progress on this challenge.

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NEWS | Side events at the Inequality, Work, and Nature conference, 7 & 10 November (in person)



Four side events are scheduled for the week of the IWN conference. These gatherings are each convened by the conference organisers – the AFD, the EU, and ACEIR – in collaboration with others such as the International Labour Organisation, the World Data Lab, and the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Climate and Development. The events will discuss future inequality diagnostics; research on transforming social inequalities through inclusive climate action; the I-Marker and EU actions in South Africa; and data to support a just and inclusive transition of jobs in South Africa.

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NEWS | ACEIR at the UN General Assembly 2023



Photo: Prof. Murray Leibbrandt (pictured), Prof. David Gordon and Dr Mary Zhang presented in person, while Prof. Nkechi S. Owoo joined online for her share of the presentation.

A paper based on ACEIR's climate vulnerability research for the [TSITICA](#) project was presented at the Science Summit during the recent 79th gathering of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. Part of a session on "Advanced Tools for Analysing Poverty, Climate and Environmental Changes", the research combined geocoded extreme weather-related disaster data with social survey microdata to understand and measure multidimensional vulnerability to climate change in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa by using indicators of a greater risk of harm based on robust criteria and scientific evidence.

This study was conducted in the three ACEIR nodes and led by Prof. Murray Leibbrandt (University of Cape Town), Prof. David Gordon (University of Bristol), Dr Mary Zhang (University of Oxford), Dr Muna Shifa (University of Cape Town), Prof. Nkechi S. Owoo (University of Ghana), and Prof. Damiano K. Manda (University of Nairobi). The study identifies and profiles communities that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of weather-related disasters. It also will be presented at the upcoming IWN conference in November and published in working papers for each country.

[WATCH RECORDING](#)

NEWS | ACEIR at the Economics Society of South Africa

Colleagues from the South Africa node at the University of Cape Town shared some of their ACEIR research at the Economics Society of South Africa (ESSA) 2023 Biennial Conference in Pretoria, South Africa, in mid-September. They presented four papers on climate, conflict, and asset inequality after an invitation to UCT's Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) to organise two special sessions – one on SALDRU research and the other on ACEIR South Africa's research projects. The conference papers are listed in the publications section below.

CAPACITY BUILDING | Measuring the redistributive impact of fiscal policy



Photo: Members from ACEIR Ghana and civil society organisations who participated in the Oxfam workshop.

The past months have seen the start of a collaboration between researchers from ACEIR’s node at the University Ghana and an Oxfam project that aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal to reduce inequality within and among countries. The partnership emerged after Oxfam in Ghana and Oxfam Indonesia identified a dearth of data for this SDG’s indicator on the redistributive impact of fiscal policy. This gap, however, was narrowed somewhat (for Ghana) through a study by ACEIR researchers at the University of Ghana who used a novel methodology developed by the Commitment to Equity (CEQ) Institute. The Oxfam project’s collaboration started in July with the ACEIR team facilitating a capacity building and strategic workshop for civil society organisations on the use of the CEQ methodology.

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CAPACITY BUILDING | Wealth Data Science Summer/ Winter School 2024



Photo: Freepik

ACEIR is teaming up with the University of Bremen's International Graduate School of Social Sciences to host one of their Schools in Computational Social Science and Data Science. Set to take place in July 2024, the Wealth Data Science Summer/Winter School (WeDSS) will take place in person on two campuses: at Constructor University in Bremen, Germany, and at ACEIR's hub at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Both locations will form a joint online campus for lectures, project work, and exchange. The Schools, which have been taking place since 2018, served as research incubators on conflicts (2018), migration (2019), social cohesion (2022), the democratic debate (2023). Next year the attention is on the genesis of wealth, in particular the mechanisms for the production of different wealth classes; mechanisms for the reproduction of wealth; and mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth. The WeDSS team is currently inviting applications from experts and projects leaders to be part of the School's programme. A call for participation, with all projects listed on the Schools' website, should be released by the end of 2023.

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CAPACITY BUILDING | Master of Development Policy and Practice

Registration for the Master of Development Policy and Practice programme of the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town, closes on 31 October 2023. Penny Parenzee, a member of ACEIR's South Africa node and Senior Programme Manager at the Nelson Mandela School, says this programme was designed to meet the developmental needs of mid-career professionals working in the public sector, civil society, non-profit and donor organisations: "This degree is well suited to leaders and managers

who grapple with public policy challenges in their work as the programme introduces them to unique perspectives on policy, development, governance, and practice.” Penny draws on her extensive experience in monitoring the implementation of various pieces of legislation and examining policy processes in South Africa, the Southern Africa Development Community, and East Africa to convene and teach the programme’s Policy Implementation course, one of its core components. With two master’s degrees (in Law and Social Policy; and in Clinical Social Work) under her belt, Penny is currently completing her PhD. Her thesis is on “Policy implementation and coordination capacity: A case study of the state’s capacity to implement the National Integrated ECD policy in a district in the Eastern Cape, South Africa”. She has received a scholarship from ACEIR for the fieldwork for this study and ACEIR’s director, Prof. Murray Leibbrandt, is her co-supervisor.

[MORE ABOUT MDPP PROGRAMME](#)

OUR TEAM | Congratulations

Dr Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón is one of the six African Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) postdoctoral research fellows appointed by UCT following the International Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, hosted at UCT in 2021. [Read more.](#)

Dr Emma Whitelaw graduated with her PhD in Economics from UCT a few months ago. Emma is based at SALDRU and is part of the ACEIR South Africa team. Her PhD thesis, “Post-school education in an unequal society and analyses inequalities in access, success, and graduate realities in South Africa” was supervised by Prof. Nicola Branson (SALDRU/ACEIR research associate) and Prof. Murray Leibbrandt (SALDRU/ACEIR director). [Read](#) about her PhD journey.

Prof. Vimal Ranchhod received the first DataFirst Francis Wilson Memorial Prize for Data-Driven Research for the best article in a peer-reviewed journal in the last two years. Vimal co-authored the paper with Miquel Pellicer (University of Marburg). The article, “Understanding the effects of racial classification in Apartheid South Africa” was published in the *Journal of Development*. [See this interview](#) with Vimal about the paper – where it started, the methodological challenges, the many people who contributed to its evolution, and the possible implications of the study’s findings.

Prof. Vimal Ranchhod was re-elected to the Economic Society of South Africa Council.

OUR TEAM | Welcome

Dr Raymond Elikplim Kofinti has joined the Kenya node as an ARUA Early Career Research Fellow. He will collaborate with ACEIR colleagues at the Department of Economics and Development Studies, University of Nairobi, on four studies to investigate:

- Rising consumption inequality and multidimensional poverty in Ghana: Do labour market conditions matter?
- Rising consumption inequality and child deprivation poverty in Ghana.
- Formal healthcare utilisation inequality in sub-Saharan Africa: Patterns and predictors.
- Formal healthcare utilisation inequality and child health outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa



Raymond speaks with excitement of this opportunity through the ARUA fellowship: “I expect it will amply position me to contribute significantly to inequality–poverty research, be at the forefront of graduate training, and make intellectual contributions to welfare-related policy options and dialogues in Africa and other developing regions.”

Raymond is a Lecturer at the Department of Data Science and Economic Policy, School of Economics, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He is an applied economics researcher with interests in welfare economics and global health research. His research involves a multifaceted approach to examining poverty, deprivations, inequalities, and health using mathematical and applied econometrics techniques.

PAST EVENTS | Seminar with Prof. Robert Lensink



Photo: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Prof. Robert Lensink from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands was our guest presenter at the September seminar that was hosted jointly with ACEIR South Africa at SALDRU. UCT. He presented experimental evidence from an Ethiopian study that measured the impact of bundling index insurance with credit and input vouchers.

NEW ACEIR PUBLICATIONS | Working paper

The socio-economic dimensions of racial inequality in South Africa: a social space perspective

Nicola Branson, Johs Hjelbrekke, Murray Leibbrandt, Vimal Ranchhod, Mike Savage, Emma Whitelaw

ACEIR Working Paper no. 10, September 2023

It is well evidenced that South Africa is characterised by extreme economic inequality. To complement the extensive body of work on the dynamics of vulnerability and poverty alleviation, this study uses a sociological lens to investigate the structuring of privilege in South Africa. The analysis is the authors' first attempt to systematically map how stocks of economic, cultural, and social capital intersect to generate systematic and structural inequalities in the country, and to consider how far these are associated with fundamental racial divides. To achieve this goal they draw on rich, nationally representative data from the National Income Dynamics Study and employ Geometric Data Analysis and Multiple Correspondence Analysis to construct a model of South African 'social space'. Their findings reveal distinct features of South African social space: 1. The inheritor class reveals the intensely strong interplay between inequalities of economic and cultural capital; 2. There is some evidence that this homogeneity is associated with an enduring racialised divide; 3. The size of the upwardly mobile class indicates that forms of middle-class privilege percolate well beyond a core of the 8% of the population that is white, suggesting fluidity and change in the South African social space; and social capital is strongly delineated by age, with older respondents displaying on average higher levels of trust. The cluster analysis reveals that trust levels increase with economic and cultural capital levels within younger age groups and could, therefore, entrench social and racial divisions.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS | Journal articles

Bassier, I., Budlender, J., **Zizzamia, R.** & Jain, R. (2023) The labour market and poverty impacts of COVID-19 in South Africa. *South African Journal of Economics*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/saje.12356>

Houensou, D. A., Hekponhoue, S., Soglo, M. A. G., & **Senou, M. M.** (2023). Does ICTs usage facilitate access to market? An empirical evidence of market gardeners in

Benin. *Journal of African Business*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228916.2023.2257556>

Houeninvo, H. G., Quenum, V. C. C., & **Senou, M. M. (2023)**. Out-of-pocket health expenditure and household consumption patterns in Benin: Is there a crowding out effect? *Health Economics Review*, 13(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13561-023-00429-8>

Ouma, S., Vogt-Williams, C., Obeng-Odoom, F., **Odoro, A. D.**, Lewis, T.J., Pheko, L. L., Stevano, S., & Kvangraven, I. (2023). Reconfiguring African Studies, reconfiguring economics: Centring intersectionality and social stratification. *Critical African Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2023.2226774>

Soro, K., & **Senou, M. M. (2023)**. Digital financial inclusion and income inequality in WAEMU: What causality for what heterogeneity? *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 11(2), 2242662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2023.2242662>

Turkson, F. E., **Odoro, A. D.**, Baffour, P., & Quartey, P. (2023). Regional integration and non-tariff barriers to intra-sub-Saharan Africa trade. *The World Economy*, 26 (2), 396–414. <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.13365>

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS | Working papers

Atta-Ankomah, R., Lambon-Quayefio, M.P., & Osei, R.D. (2023). *Differences in inequality measurement: Ghana case study*. WIDER Working Paper no. 2023/91. UNU-WIDER.

Branson, N., **Ranchhod, V., & Whitelaw, E. (2023)**. *What can we understand about learning losses in 2020 from university application and enrolment data?* SALDRU Working Paper no. 301. Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Branson, N., **Ranchhod, V., & Whitelaw, E. (2023)**. *South African student retention during 2020: Evidence from system wide higher education institutional data*. SALDRU Working Paper no. 300. Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Manda, D.K., Mwabu, G., Oleche, M., & Muriithi, M.K. (2023). *Understanding inequality and its evolution in Kenya: The contribution of the UNU-WIDER World Income Inequality Database initiative*. WIDER Working Paper no. 2023/109. UNU-WIDER.

Mudiriza, G., Grotte, J., De Lannoy, A., David, A., **Leibbrandt, M. (2023)**. *Developing a youth labour market index for South Africa at the sub-national level*. SALDRU Working Paper no. 297. Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Shifa, M., Mabhena, R., Ranchhod, V., Leibbrandt, M. (2023). *An assessment of inequality estimates for the case of South Africa*. WIDER Working Paper no. 2023/90. UNU-WIDER.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS | Book chapters

Oduro, A. D. & Swaminathan, H. (forthcoming). Individualising wealth and asset measures in the global south: Challenges and new directions for research. In F. Bennet, S. Avram & S. Austen (Eds.) *A research agenda for financial resources within the household*. Edward Elgar.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS | Conference papers

Andrés Díaz Pabón, F., & Shifa, M., Ranchhod, V., & Machemedze, T. (2023). Assets, climate change shocks, and wellbeing in South Africa. Paper presented at the 2023 Biennial Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 12 – 14 September 2023.

Andrés Díaz Pabón, F., & Shifa, M. (2023). Development, inequalities, and conflict: The case of Ethiopia. Paper presented at the 2023 Biennial Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 12 – 14 September 2023.

Merven, B., **Hartley, F.**, Hughes, A., Marquard, A., & **Ranchhod, V.** (2023). Estimating the economy-wide and redistributive impacts of mitigation in South Africa. Paper presented at the 2023 Biennial Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 12 – 14 September 2023.

Bassier, I., Budlender, J., & **Leibbrandt, L.** (2023). Stimulus effects of public social programmes. Paper presented at the 2023 Biennial Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 12 – 14 September 2023.

Branson, N., Hjelmbrekke, J., **Leibbrandt, M., Ranchhod, V.**, Savage, M., & **Whitelaw, E.** (2023). The socio-economic dimensions of racial inequality in South Africa: A social space perspective. Paper presented at the 2023 Biennial Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 12 – 14 September 2023.

Branson, N., **Ranchhod, V.**, & **Whitelaw, E.** (2023). South African student retention during 2020: Evidence from system wide higher education institutional data. Paper presented at the 2023 Biennial Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 12 – 14 September 2023.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS | Online articles & opinion-editorials

[La gestión del gobierno Petro: Amazonía y petróleo](#)

[\[The management of the Petro government: Amazon and oil\]](#)

Periódico desdeabajo, no. 305

Brigitte Castañeda (Universidad de los Andes, Colombia) and **Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón** discuss the challenges for an energy transition policy in Colombia in this article. The current Colombian government is aiming to decarbonise its economy. However, in Colombia, oil and gas extraction represent 40% of exports, 20% of fiscal income, and 76% of the funds allocated to local governments. This presents dilemmas of financing the government's social agenda while aiming for the decarbonisation of the economy.

[Catalyse social mobility through the success of students](#)

University World News, 24 August 2023

"South Africa is characterised by deeply embedded structural inequalities, high unemployment, and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage. However, amidst these challenges, there exists opportunity for change", write **Emma Whitelaw** and Nicola Branson in an article about Murray Leibbrandt's keynote address at the Siyaphumelela Network Conference 2023. His presentation, which was based on research conducted by SALDRU's Siyaphambili Project, foregrounded the complex and challenging contexts from which students come, but also the important contributions that delegates at the conference make through supporting students.

IN THE MEDIA

[BRICS meeting in Johannesburg](#)

Radio 5, RTVE, 23 August 2023

Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón discussed different expectations and possible outcomes of the RICS gathering that was taking place in South Africa in line with current geopolitical tensions, and the possibility of a new power block taking centre stage in world politics.



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