

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

May – August 2024

This issue of our quarterly newsletter focuses on the theme of research capacity building, which is one of the core pillars of the African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research.

We also dedicate the newsletter to the late Martin Wittenberg, a brilliant

econometrist and Professor in the School of Economics, University of Cape Town, who had a passion for teaching and supporting students. Prof. Wittenberg was the Director of ACEIR's data partner, DataFirst, until he stepped down at the end of 2023. He **was known** for his dedication to rigorous scholarship; as a mentor of quality and depth to graduate students; and as a contributor to public goods that can enhance reliable research.

The past months have witnessed exciting developments to our objective to nurture the growth of young and emerging African researchers in the fields of inequality and poverty.

- Our proposal on a new collaborative and interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Sustainable Development Studies with key partners was given the go-ahead as one of 16 new programmes of the African Research Universities Alliance to boost PhD graduation in African universities.
- We officially launched the Africa-Europe Cluster of Research Excellence in Inequalities, Poverty, and Deprivation with partners at the CoRE IPD's first summer school in Nairobi, Kenya. This research consortium will equip especially young African researchers for the multidisciplinary approach needed drive the continent's development. The inaugural summer school set the tone for excellent and exciting capacity building collaborations to come.
- Our hub in Cape Town hosted the African campus of the Wealth Data Science Summer/Winter School. The two-week gathering was the fifth in a series of annual research incubators organised by the University of Bremen and other partners to advance future research through data-driven modeling approaches.
- Researchers from our Ghana node have worked with Oxfam and the World Bank on capacity building for different users of a new microsimulation tool that evaluates the impact of social policies on inequality and poverty in Ghana.

We conclude the bulletin's focus on education and capacity building with a feature that introduces the current cohort of emerging researchers located at our different nodes.

Other news in this bulletin includes announcements on two new inequality reports for Mozambique and Namibia, respectively; a series of working papers that emerged from the Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action Project; and a new study on African countries' progress to translate the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights into national legislation.

NEWS | Setting up a collaborative PhD Programme in Sustainable Development Studies



An ambitious collaborative and interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Sustainable Development Studies will be rolled out in 2026 by ACEIR and other significant partner institutions. It is one of 16 interdisciplinary PhD programmes supported by the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) to produce more young and especially female African scholars dedicated to research and innovation that benefit the continent’s pursuit of regional and global development goals. The programme is said to be unique and at a scale that currently does not exist. It will be offered jointly with the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Climate and Development, which – like ACEIR – is also hosted by the University of Cape Town on behalf of ARUA. Several European universities that are collaborating in the Clusters of Research Excellence launched by ARUA and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities are the other key partners in the programme.

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NEWS | Overcoming an unequal world through equitable partnerships – official launch of the CoRE IPD



*CoRE IPD leaders and researchers following a meeting with the leadership of the University of Nairobi.
Photo credit: The official account of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi on X.*

The African and European Unions’ joint Innovation Agenda calls for support for research cooperation to develop knowledge together and share technology and expertise in the interest of sustainable and inclusive development. Last month, this mandate was taken forward with the official launch of an Africa-Europe research consortium that, over the next decade, will investigate how inequalities can be reduced to lessen poverty and deprivation in Africa. It is one of 20 Clusters of Research Excellence set up jointly by African and European Union research universities to work together on global and societal challenges. With ACEIR’s three partner universities appointed as the African collaborators, this Cluster brings exciting opportunities to equip especially young African researchers for the multidisciplinary approach needed to help make sense of solutions to the continent’s development challenges.

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NEWS | Diving into a “treasure trove” on the roots of inequality, poverty, and deprivation in Africa



The summer school was hosted at the University of Nairobi Towers campus.

If its inaugural summer school is anything to go by, the Cluster of Research Excellence in Inequalities, Poverty, and Deprivation (CoRE IPD) is off to an excellent start to meeting its objective to nurturing research excellence through education and capacity building. The 2024 summer school – on the roots of inequality, poverty, and deprivation – was attended by 41 early career researchers. The five-day event was hosted at the University of Nairobi where ACEIR’s Kenya node is based.

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NEWS | Outcomes of joint Wealth Data Science Summer/Winter School "to benefit researchers and policymakers"



Participants at the WeDSSS African campus at the University of Cape Town.

Data availability and quality are two factors behind the current poor understanding of the links between wealth accumulation and social and environmental degradation. In the first two weeks of July, ACEIR had the opportunity to help contribute to this field of inquiry by hosting the African campus of the Wealth Data Science Summer/Winter School (WeDSSS) at the hub’s home at the Southern Africa Labour and Research and Development Unit, University of Cape Town.

The WeDSSS was the fifth in a series of Schools in Computational Social Science and Data Science organised by the University of Bremen’s International Graduate School of Social Sciences and other partners. The 2024 school was an opportunity for early career researchers to work with specialists on various wealth data research projects that can help our understanding of how wealth is produced and reproduced.

It was organised by Prof. Hilke Brockmann and Dr Jan Lorenz (Constructor University), and Prof. Murray Leibbrandt and Prof. Vimal Ranchhod (ACEIR and University of Cape Town).

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NEWS | Oxfam collaboration leads to new tool for evaluating policy impacts



Following the launch, a two-day training workshop facilitated by the World Bank and Oxfam in Ghana gave researchers and civil society organisations the opportunity to get familiar with using the new microsimulation tool. Photo credit: Supplied by Oxfam in Ghana.

ACEIR Ghana researchers have collaborated with Oxfam and the World Bank on capacity building for different users of a new microsimulation tool to evaluates the impact of social policies on inequality and poverty in Ghana. The tool can be used to assess government

welfare and fiscal interventions and builds on a study by the ACEIR research node that is hosted by the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana. The public launch of the tool in June 2024 was followed by capacity building on its use.

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FEATURE | Our PhD students and early career researchers

In introducing the emerging researchers located at ACEIR's research nodes, a special shout-out of congratulations goes to these two doctoral candidates who will be graduating in September!

Susan W. Kamundia will receive a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Economics, University of Cape Town. Her PhD thesis dealt with maternal and child health outcomes in relation to accessibility, spatial distribution, inequality and free maternal care in Kenya. Susan was supervised by Prof. Murray Leibbrandt.

Penny Parenzee completed a PhD programme at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town. Her research thesis, 'Policy Implementation and Coordination Capacity: A case study of the state's capacity to implement the National Integrated Early Childhood Development policy in a district in the Eastern Cape, South Africa', contributes to the current debates on coordination capacity for the implementation of ECD services in South Africa. Penny's thesis was co-supervised by Prof. Murray Leibbrandt.

[Visit this webpage](#) for more details on each researcher and links to their research publications.



Aarifah Razak
University of Cape Town
PhD candidate
Inequality and social mobility, especially intergenerational mobility in South Africa.



Arindam Jana
University of Cape Town
PhD candidate
The role of infrastructure and service delivery in perpetuating/ mitigating urban spatial inequalities in the Global South.



Bongai Munguni
University of Cape Town/University of Bristol
PhD candidate
The feminisation of poverty, measurement and alleviation strategies.



Busisiwe Radebe
University of Cape Town/ Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
PhD candidate
The drivers of intra-racial inequality in South African townships.



Chandré Jacobs
University of Cape Town
PhD candidate



Diana Nyachio
University of Cape Town
PhD candidate



PhD candidate
Inequality and conflict, focusing specifically on local inequality, protest action and communal violence in South Africa.



PhD candidate
Inclusive growth, particularly dynamics of structural transformation, labour markets, poverty/ inequality in developing countries.



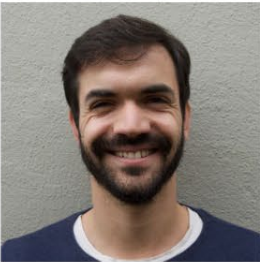
Dr Emma Whitelaw
University of Cape Town
Inequalities in post-school education in South Africa; and the nexus of education, labour markets, and other social outcomes in South Africa and Ghana.



Faaïqa Hartley
University of Cape Town
PhD student
Developmental issues in Africa, primarily South Africa, focusing on energy transitions, climate change and circular economics.



Dr Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón
University of Cape Town
Conflict, development, and economics, including the mechanisms that bring about a political economy of inequality and conflict in developing countries.



Gabriel Espi-Sanchis
University of Cape Town
PhD candidate
South Africa's informal economy.



Dr Laura Nelima Barasa
University of Nairobi
Innovation, agriculture, poverty, climate change, and gender.



Moisés Siúta
University of Cape Town
PhD candidate
Social protection and poverty, in particular financial inclusion and economic inequality in Mozambique.



Dr Muna Shifa
University of Cape Town
Land tenure systems and rural livelihoods, urbanisation and development, social cohesion and inequality, and the analysis of poverty and inequality.



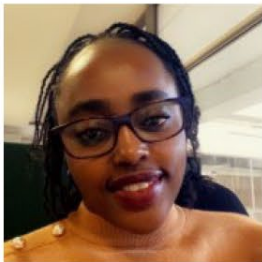
Penny Parenzee
University of Cape Town
Pending PhD graduate
The state's capacity to implement integrated policies that address inequality with a focus on South Africa's early childhood development policy.



Dr Phyllis Mumia Machio
University of Nairobi
Areas of maternal and child health, the labour market, gender in agriculture, and development economics generally.



Dr Raymond Elikplim Kofinti
University of Cape Coast
Welfare economics and global health, particularly multifaceted approaches to examining poverty, deprivations, inequalities, and health.



Susan Kamundia
University of Cape Town
Pending PhD graduate
Maternal health care utilisation in the context of inequality/poverty; multidimensional poverty/ inequality and gender gaps in the labour force.



NEW PUBLICATIONS | Working papers



TSITICA series

The full set of working papers by the multidisciplinary team from the Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action (TSITICA) Project is now available online. The project's main objective was to generate evidence on, and knowledge of, how African societies can design and implement climate action to improve sustainable livelihoods and reduce both poverty and inequality. The project was a collaboration between ACEIR and the ARUA Centre of Excellence for Climate Development researchers from the universities of Ghana, Nairobi and Cape Town, and scholars from the London School of Economics and Politics and the UK universities of Bristol, East Anglia and Manchester. Twenty members and affiliates of ACEIR contributed to 10 papers in the series. [Read more](#)

Social inequality in Mozambique

This study provides a profile of social inequality in Mozambique from 1997 to 2017. The analysis was undertaken in collaboration with researchers from Mozambique's Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económico (Institute for Social and Economic Studies) and with funding from the European Union under the Research Facility on Inequalities programme implemented by the Agence Française de Développement. The authors are Moisés Siúta (ACEIR, University of Cape Town/Eduardo Mondlane University); Felix Mambo (International Growth Centre/London School of Economics and Political Science); Ivan Manhique (London School of Economics and Political Science); Muna Shifa (ACEIR, University of Cape Town); and Bento Munkuka (Center of Development Economics). [Read more](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



Release | An inequality diagnostic for Namibia

This study commenced earlier this year and is one of several pilots of the International Labour Organisation in different countries to develop comprehensive and integrated policy frameworks to reduce and prevent inequities in the workplace. The research builds on ACEIR's series of inequality diagnostics by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the different dimensions of inequalities in Namibia but with a special focus on inequalities in the world of work, and how these inequalities relate to other aspects of inequality and drivers outside of the world of work. The research team, led by Prof. Vimal Ranchhod (ACEIR, University of Cape Town), are planning to release the Namibia report towards the end of 2024. [More about the study](#)

Call for proposals | Intersections of class, gender, and other inequalities and implications for well-being

Dr Muna Shifa is organising a session on intersections of class, gender, and other inequalities and implications for well-being for next year's 30th International Population Conference. The conference is scheduled for 13 – 18 July 2025 in Brisbane, Australia. The deadline for submissions is 15 September 2024. [Read more](#)

RECENT EVENTS

Seminar | Assessing implementation of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights

This semester resumed with a seminar on the progress of African countries towards gender equality by translating provisions of the African Union's Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights into their national laws. The Protocol, which has been described as the Bill of Rights for African women, has been ratified by 44 African countries since it was adopted in 2003. The seminar presented a study that used the WORLD Policy Analysis Center's unique database on countries' laws to gain insights into progress to translate provisions of the Protocol into national law. The study is by Dr Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón

(ACEIR, University of Cape Town); Prof. Abena D. Oduro (ACEIR, University of Ghana); Prof. Jody Heymann and Dr Amy Raub (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, University of California, LA).

WATCH RECORDING

OUR FOOTPRINT | Conferences

The mid-year conference season provided ample opportunities to ACEIR researchers and partners to present insights from our work at locations on different continents.

2024 Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society, Cote d'Ivoire

[Multidimensional poverty and spatial-temporal distributions in Kenya](#)

Susan W. Kamundia, Murray Leibbrandt

Bristol Poverty Institute Conference 2024, United Kingdom

[Poverty and the impacts of COVID-19 in Africa](#)

Murray Leibbrandt on inequality and poverty through the prism of a COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa; Nkechi S. Owoo on spatial and regression analyses of climate shocks and household food insecurity in Ghana

Evidence to Action Conference 2024, Ghana

[Measuring what we mean: New approaches to resilience measurement & evaluation](#)

Robert D. Osei

Groningen Growth and Development Centre 2024 Conference, the Netherlands

Inequality research in Africa: New insights

Murray Leibbrandt, Robert D. Osei

International Association For Feminist Economics 2024 conference, Italy

[Two decades of the Maputo Protocol: An assessment of progress made in its implementation](#)

Abena D. Oduro, Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón

Jan Tinbergen European Peace Science Conference, Republic of Ireland

Local inequality and community protests in South Africa

Chandré Jacobs

Just transition for and in the Global South workshop, United Kingdom

A micro-level analysis of sociodemographic vulnerability to climate change in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa

Mary Zhang on behalf of Muna Shifa, Nkechi S. Owoo, Damiano K. Manda, Murray Leibbrandt, David Gordon, Ellen Dyer

Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame, France

[Social mobility in South Africa: What we know and why this is important](#)
Murray Leibbrandt

The WIDER Development Conference 2024, Mozambique
[Affirmative action and labour markets](#)
Vimal Ranchhod

IN THE NEWS

[El balance inconcluso de las políticas del gobierno Petro sobre la pobreza y la inequidad](#)
[The unfinished balance of the Petro government's policies on poverty and inequality]
Desde Abajo, 24 August 2024

[Constructor University and University of Cape Town conclude joint Wealth Data Science Summer/Winter School 2024](#)
Constructor University News, 25 July 2024

[UoN hosted Launch of Cluster of Research Excellence in Inequality \(CoRE-IPD\)](#)
University of Nairobi news, 19 July 2024



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