

**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). 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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# WELCOME TO THE ACEIR NEWS BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2021

As we enter the last quarter of 2021, the news and other announcements in this bulletin are pointing to several exciting developments for ACEIR. First, that our work and engagements with research, government, and other partners are beginning to



return to a form of “normal” following the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, a growing recognition of the value and contributions of the Centre, its researchers and network towards tackling one of the world’s biggest challenges: unsustainable inequalities, which are now worsened by an observed increase in extreme poverty and a slowdown in economic growth globally, but especially in Africa.

Lastly, this news bulletin tells of the ongoing expansion of the ACEIR team and different ways in which our researchers and their work are getting recognised.

We invite you to read on about the recent SDGs Africa Summit 2021; the release of our third inequality diagnostics for African countries; a youth-focused dialogue to feed into the Africa-France Summit 2021; new publications; and much more.

NEWS | Contributing to the SDGs Africa Summit 2021



When South Africa locked down to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the University of Cape Town and its partners were one month away from hosting an international summit on the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. The event was postponed until this month – held in the wake of a post-COVID world that saw all African economies battered by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, and with future growth and development under threat. The summit’s thematic track workshops on Poverty and Inequality were co-convened by ACEIR director, Prof. Murray Leibbrandt, and with a wealth of input and participation from ACEIR-affiliated scholars and partners.

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## NEWS | Launch of the 'Inequality Diagnostics and Trends for Kenya 2020' report



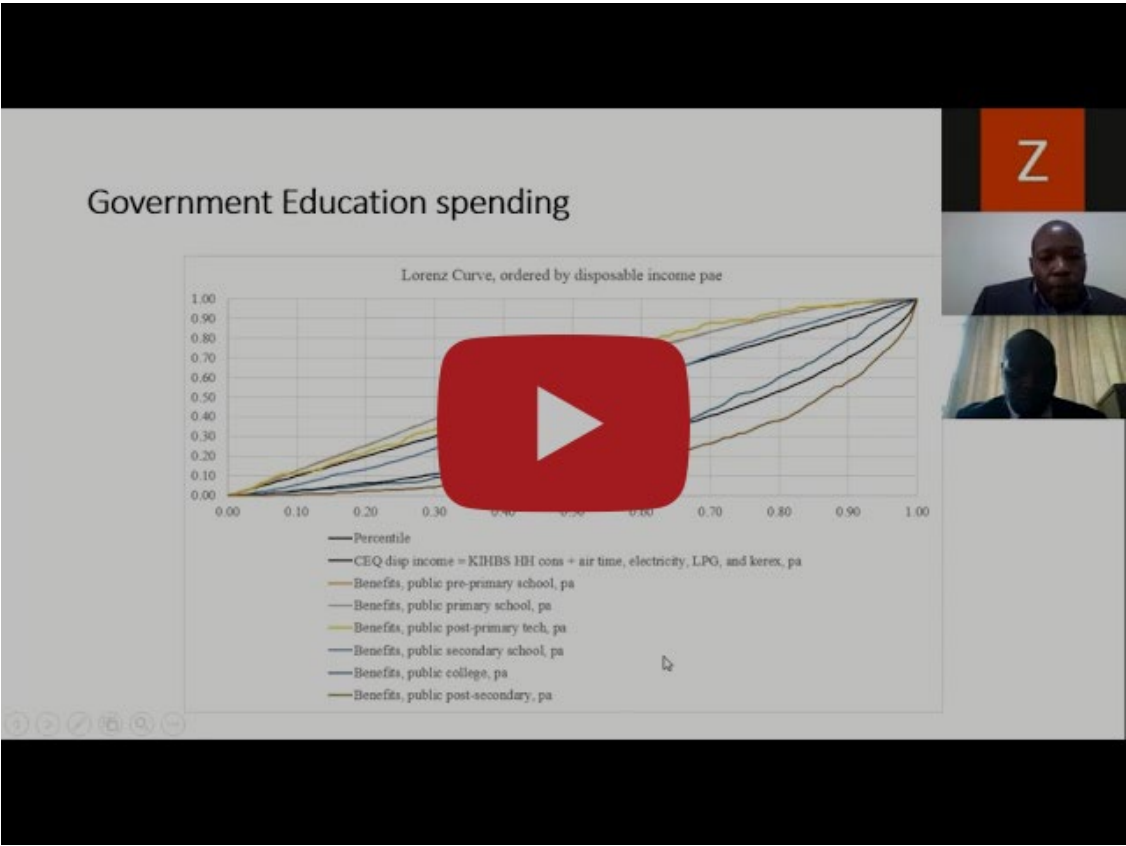
Following the publication of the South African and Ghanaian inequality diagnostics reports, the next report in this series – for Kenya – was launched on 12 July 2021. The reports serve as a baseline on inequality trends in each country and are used to explore the implications of the data analyses with different sectoral stakeholders. The launch was hosted online and in partnership with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics; the School of Economics at the University of Nairobi; and the Agence Française de Développement as part of the Research Facility on Inequality funded by the European Union.

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## NEWS | Dissemination workshop on the impact of fiscal action on poverty and inequality in Kenya





The launch of the Kenyan inequality diagnostics report was followed by a virtual dissemination workshop to share findings from another joint study by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and ACEIR’s research node at the School of Economics, University of Nairobi. By using a methodology developed by the Commitment to Equity (CEQ) Institute, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of taxation, social expenditure and cash transfers on inequality and poverty in Kenya. The rich findings from this research can assist improved dialogue on inequality and poverty in this East African country and support evidence-based policymaking to address these challenges. The study was also funded by the AFD and the European Union as part of the work of the Research Facility on Inequalities.

**NEWS | Debate ahead of the Africa–France Summit: Historical inequalities and economic transformation in South Africa**





Image: Johnny Miller, *Unequal Scenes*, used with permission

ACEIR was honoured to co-host, with the French embassy in South Africa, this debate as part of a series across Africa at the request of the President of France. The purpose of the dialogue was to create a platform for exchanging perspectives on South Africa’s inequalities and to motivate for priority actions and policies in overcoming these inequalities, and with a special focus on the country’s youth. Speakers included high-profile business leaders, a prominent student activist, academics, and the head of South Africa’s Youth Employment Service. Proposals that emerged out of the debates were fed into the Africa–France Summit, held on 8 October, where Pres. Emmanuel Macron hosted a discussion with youth representatives from Africa, France, and the diaspora.

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## NEWS | ACEIR Ghana researcher nominated for the IUSSP elections and featured by the IEA

Dr Nkechi S. Owoo, a senior lecturer at the Department of Economics at the University of Ghana, has been nominated as a candidate for Africa in the [upcoming elections](#) of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). The elections, held every four years, will be to vote for the 2022 - 2025 Council and the 2025 Committee on Nominations.

In September, Dr Owoo was the International Economic Association's featured researcher. Her research focuses on spatial econometrics as well as microeconomic issues in developing countries, including household behaviour, health, agriculture, gender, and population and demographic economics.

Dr Owoo is a member of the ACEIR team who is exploring spatial inequalities in COVID-19 vulnerabilities and lockdown



preparedness in Ghana, a research project funded by ACEIR. Read about her motivation for choosing a career in economics; how key findings from her research more broadly informs how labour markets function in sub-Saharan Africa; and her advice to young scholars, especially females.



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NEWS | ARAU-Carnegie fellowship commencing for ACEIR Ghana researcher



A former research intern at ACEIR’s Ghana node was awarded one of 13 ARAU-Carnegie Early Career Research Fellowships, which will involve him in the research of two African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) centres of excellence. Kwadwo Danso-Mensah is a Research Officer at the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, which hosts ACEIR’s research node in Ghana. Expected to graduate with a PhD in Development Economics at that university soon, Kwadwo is involved in undertaking a series of tax and expenditure benefit incidence exercises for Ghana by using the Commitment to Equity methodology developed by the CEQ Institute. As part of the fellowship, he will be contributing to the research of ACEIR’s Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action project, which is hosted jointly with the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Climate and Development.



MEET THE ACEIR TEAM

NEWS | ACEIR postgraduate student now a joint PhD candidate



Image: University of Cape Town

An [international study](#) involving two ACEIR researchers has revealed that hundreds of millions of Africans do not have access to the most basic facilities to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. ACEIR’s director, Prof Murray Leibbrandt, and postgraduate researcher, Bongai Munguni, were co-authors on the study which used household survey data from 54 African countries. The research investigated the feasibility of non-pharmacological public health interventions, such as physical distancing or isolation at home, to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Bongai is part of the inaugural UCT–Bristol Researchers without Borders Cotutelle (co-tutored PhDs) programme. Under this arrangement, she is enrolled as a PhD student in Economics at the University of Cape Town, and for a PhD in Policy Studies at the University of Bristol. Having grown up as a child of subsistence farmers in Mozambique, and attending school across the border in Zimbabwe, her story is one of determination and a desire to get educated to break the cycle of poverty for rural women.

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UPCOMING EVENTS | Biennial international conference



## Global Public Health Challenges: Facing Them in Africa

*Thu, 18 Nov 2021 - Sat, 20 Nov 2021*

The ARUA 2021 Biennial International conference will bring together experts from universities, research institutions, government, industry, civil society, international organisations, etc., to discuss the different steps that African economies need to take to face global public health challenges squarely. In reflecting on the prominent lessons from the handling of previous and current pandemics, the medium-to-long term implications of measures, and steps taken to contain the spread of the virus in Africa will be the focus of the conference. This will be done in recognition of the interconnectedness of the various issues involved in dealing with a pandemic.

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## PAST EVENTS | African Economic Research Consortium workshop, 24 - 25 August 2021

The ACEIR research team at the Kenya node, University of Nairobi, in August contributed to the AERC's final framework papers workshop held virtually by presenting a paper titled "Human Capital, Household Prosperity and Social Inequalities in Africa". This paper uses datasets from five African countries (Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uganda and Nigeria) and involves researchers from Nigeria, Cameroon and Kenya (ACEIR node). The paper is currently being finalised based on comments received during the workshop.

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## TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING | Webinars for shared learning



ACEIR's hub-and-node model is designed to facilitate shared learning on the multi-dimensionality of inequality across and within African countries, and how these relate to contemporary issues such as climate change, social inequality, sustainable livelihoods, etc. Webinars are one of the tools used for shared learning and capacity building within the team, and with our research partners as well as within broader policy research networks.



Image: Jiska de Groot

### TSITICA webinar | Gender inequalities in asset ownership and energy access

Following the recent publication of the 'Global Gender Gap' report, the Transforming Social Inequalities Through Climate Action (TSITICA) project's webinar, on 26 August, thematised gender inequality as part of the global discussions on closing the gender gaps between men and women. In focusing on the nexus between climate change, poverty and inequality, a central theme of this research is that climate action interventions must acknowledge the existing gendered inequalities in order to be truly inclusive and most impactful. TSITICA is a joint project of ACEIR and the ARUA Centre of Excellence on Climate and Development, both hosted at the University of Cape Town.

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### Africa Day webinar | Recent trends and patterns in spatial and national inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa



One of the aims of Africa Day celebrations on the continent is to reflect on how Africa has made progress since freed from colonialism and oppression, and the common challenges that remain in a global environment. This year, ACEIR contributed to this goal with an online discussion on recent trends and patterns in spatial and national inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa. Presented by Dr Muna Shifa, the webinar drew on a new ACEIR working paper (see below) that was authored by Dr Shifa and Prof Murray Leibbrandt, both located at the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

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NEW ACEIR PUBLICATIONS | Working papers

[Spatial inequality in sub-Saharan Africa](#)  
*Muna Shifa, Murray Leibbrandt*  
*ACEIR Working Paper no. 9, August 2021*

The ninth in the series, this ACEIR working paper provides within-country spatial and national inequality estimates in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) using comparable data from the Demographic Health Surveys. Two indicators are used to measure household welfare. First, detailed information on living standards indicators is used to calculate asset indices using data from 24 SSA countries with comparable data in recent years. The inequality estimates based on the asset indices are then used to provide contemporary asset inequality estimates in SSA. The second indicator of household welfare is based on data on access to basic services. Access to basic services is measured by deriving an index calculated using indicators such as access to water, sanitation, electricity, a telephone, and education. Changes in inequalities in access to basic services are then compared using data from 27 SSA countries with comparable data for at least between 1995 and 2018.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS |  
Journal articles

**ACEIR Kenya** Co-authored by Dr. Martine O. Oleche (School of Economics, University of Nairobi):



- Isabella, K., Mugo, M., & Oleche, O. M., (2021). [Provider process quality of healthcare and its determinants in Kenya](#). *African Journal of Economic Review*; 9(4), 64–84.
- Adesuyi, O. O., Kioko, U. M., & Oleche, O. M. (2021). Socio-economic disparities in under-five child malnutrition in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Health Science*, 13(9), 76–89. <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v13n9p76>
- Adesuyi, O. O., Kioko, U. M., & Oleche, O.M. (2021). Cultural, maternal and environmental factors contributing to high under-five mortality in identified hotspots in Nigeria. *European Journal of Development Studies*, 1(3), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejdevelop.2021.1.3.25>

**ACEIR South Africa** Co-authored by Prof Murray Leibbrandt and Bongani Muguni (Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town):

- Brewer, T.F. et al. (2021). Housing, sanitation and living conditions affecting SARS-CoV-2 prevention interventions in 54 African countries. *Epidemiology and Infection*, 149, e183, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0950268821001734>

## NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS | Positioning papers

**ACEIR South Africa** Co-authored by Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón and Prof Murray Leibbrandt (Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town):

- Bhorat, H., Díaz Pabón, F. A., & Leibbrandt, M. (2021). [Inequality and growth in Africa after 2021: How can we do better?](#) Positioning paper for Thematic Track 7: Poverty and Inequality of the International Summit on the SDGs in Africa 2021 hosted by the University of Cape Town, 13 – 15 September 2021. [Full paper]
- Bhorat, H., Díaz Pabón, F. A., & Leibbrandt, M. (2021). [Inequality and growth in Africa after 2021: How can we do better?](#) Draft positioning paper summary for Thematic Track 7: Poverty and Inequality of the International Summit on the SDGs in Africa 2021 hosted by the University of Cape Town, 13 – 15 September 2021. [Summary]

## IN THE MEDIA

[Millions of Africans lack basic facilities to curb COVID-19, study confirms](#)  
UCT News, 28 September 2021



[How the Kenyan kitchen, living room have changed over time](#)

*The Standard*, 22 July 2021

[Geospatial issues impact inequality levels in southern Africa](#)

*Engineering News*, 21 May 2021

[80% of households in Turkana can't afford basic needs — KNBS](#)

*The Star*, 18 July 2021

[List of wealthy and poor counties](#)

*TUKO*, 17 July 2021

[KNBS report ranking Turkana poorest county was 'old' — Nanok](#)

*The Star*, 17 July 2021

[New survey shows most kenyan jobs are held by men, women still earning less](#)

*TUKO*, 15 July 2021

[Kenya's Turkana county experienced the highest increase in inequality: report](#)

*DownToEarth*, 15 July 2021

[Kenya on course to reduce inequality amid economic policy reforms: report](#)

*CGTN Africa*, 12 July 2021

[Kenya's poorest, most unequal counties – report](#)

*Citizen Digital*, 12 July 2021

[Kenya ranks high in inequality among African peers - report](#)

*The Standard*, 12 July 2021

[Inequality in South Africa is a 'ticking timebomb'](#)

*UCT News*, 21 May 2021

[The Colombian protests reflect a deep legitimacy crisis](#)

*Aljazeera*, 21 May 2021

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