



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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ACEIR NEWS BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2021

As we approach the end of the year, the ACEIR team is reflecting with gratitude and a good sense of satisfaction on our work and achievements in 2021.

First, we are thankful that our teams in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa have remained free from fatalities due to the coronavirus outbreak that continues to ravage populations around the globe. Second, we celebrate the Centre's milestones reached this year; some of which are:

- The release of the third report – for Kenya – in our series of inequality diagnostics for different African countries. More country reports are underway, and we will communicate news about these in 2022.
- An online hub of national datasets for West African countries are now up and running.
- Three more working papers were published, while several that focus on COVID-19 vulnerabilities and lockdown preparedness will be ready for release in the first quarter of the new year.
- Data scholarship capacity building for the ACEIR teams and other interested researchers continued this year with online courses facilitated by DataFirst and other partners.
- With the Centre's growing contributions to the evidence base on African inequalities, partner institutions and associates have called on ACEIR's researchers to present at several high-profile international conferences. These included the European Union and Agence Française de Développement; the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA); and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population.

In this news bulletin, we reflect on ACEIR's contributions to ARUA's third biennial conference held in November. We also share news on: the Ghana node's new data hub; achievements of some ACEIR researchers; a recent online course on advanced poverty research methods; and the latest webinar of a project that investigates how climate change action can be socially transformative in three contrasting African countries.

We thank you for your continued support and interest in our work and extend our best wishes for a safe and restful break until we reconnect in the new year.

NEWS | African Research Universities Alliance biennial conference 2021



Planning for inclusive growth: What did the COVID-19 pandemic teach us?

The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the fact that people-centred, inclusive, and sustainable development requires overcoming the multiple deprivations that people experience in Africa due to poverty, inequality, and unemployment. The pandemic also illustrated the importance and value of a strong evidence base and quality data on socio-economic vulnerabilities; a nuanced understanding of where, on a spatial level, these are experienced most; and if and how policy responses to the pandemic have worked. These were some of the key points from the final keynote address by ACEIR director, Prof Murray Leibbrandt, to the third biennial conference of ARUA.

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Post-COVID growth, poverty, and inequality in Africa

Also making an important contribution to the ARUA biennial conference 2021 was Prof Robert Osei, convener of ACEIR’s research node based at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, Legon. Prof Osei was one of three contributors to a plenary session on the economic and societal impact of global public health challenges in Africa. His presentation illustrated that African countries in 2020 during COVID-19-related lockdowns experienced negative economic growth, less tax revenue collection, and increased fiscal debt. This was while, during the same period, income earning was reduced, extreme poverty increased, and inequalities were exacerbated by the pandemic.

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Early career workshop on climate change, inequality, and health



According to the [World Health Organisation](#), “climate change is resulting in poorer health outcomes, increasing mortality and is a driver of health inequities”. For this reason, health was chosen a COP26 science priority area. With the importance of understanding the relationship between climate change, inequality, and health in mind, ACEIR and the ARUA Centre of Excellence for Climate and Development (ARUA-CD) hosted a workshop for early career researchers at the ARUA biennial conference 2021. One aim of the workshop was to assist these researchers to explore topics for future collaboration.

Setting the scene for discussions on the linkages between the three critical Sustainable Development Goals on good health and well-being, reduced inequalities, and climate action, were two introductory presentations – by Dr Nkechi Owoo (ACEIR Ghana node, University of Ghana) and Dr James Irlam (University of Cape Town). These were followed by group discussions on the dimensions of poverty, inequality and health and links to climate change, as well as what is needed for climate change actions to address climate hazards, poverty, inequality, and health.

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NEWS | Ghana node data hub goes live



In 2019, work commenced to support the establishment of a data centre for the research community in each ACEIR node country. Leading this undertaking is Prof. Martin Wittenberg and colleagues at DataFirst, based at the University of Cape Town. DataFirst has an extensive track record on the African continent in training and capacity building in data curation and setting up dissemination portals and is the continent’s only internationally certified data repository. This week the Ghana node, which is hosted by ISSER at the University of Ghana, Legon, launched a data hub for the West Africa region. The Kenya node’s data hub is underway, while the South Africa node’s data hub is part of DataFirst’s comprehensive online data repository.

[VISIT THE GHANA NODE DATA HUB](#)

NEWS | Congratulations to ACEIR researchers!



We are proud of our colleague, Dr Nkechi Owoo, who was elected a Council member for Africa for the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. She is based at ISSER, University of Ghana, Legon, where ACEIR’s Ghana research node is located. Dr Owoo is a member of the ACEIR team who is exploring spatial inequalities in COVID-19 vulnerabilities and lockdown preparedness in Ghana.

And, congra-tulations to Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón who has received a 2020 Emma Goldman Snowball Award from the

FLAX Foundation. Fabio is based at ACEIR's South Africa node at the Southern Africa Research and Development Unit, University of Cape Town. He was nominated for this award based on his transdisciplinary and prolific work as a political scientist and public intellectual. See the In the Media section below for his latest article in *The Conversation*.



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: Andrew Marquard

TSITICA webinar | COP26 outcomes and their relevance for the research on transformative climate action to reduce social inequality

The November webinar of ACEIR's joint [project](#) with ARUA-CD focused on the outcomes of COP26 and their relevance for research on transformative climate action to reduce

social inequality. The Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action (TSITICA) project aims to inspire climate actions that also reduce poverty and inequality, based on evidence and insights from the research, and in this way contribute the Agenda 2030 ambition of leaving no one behind. The webinar was an engaging discussion between TSITICA researchers who participated at COP26: Dr Alina Averchenkova (London School of Economics and Political Science), Dr George Outa (University of Nairobi), and Dr Andrew Marquard (University of Cape Town). They reflected on their experiences and roles at COP26 and shared their opinions on the outcomes of the global summit.

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IN THE MEDIA



[El impacto de la covid-19 en la pobreza y la desigualdad en África](#)

The Conversation, 14 November 2021

“The pandemic has once again put the focus of States on their role to protect citizens and promote equitable development”, write ACEIR’s Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón and Murray Leibbrandt in this article on the impact of COVID-19 on poverty and inequality in Africa. “However, any development program has to address barriers to social mobility (manifested in terms of gender, identity, clan, or “race”) and the ability to create quality jobs”, they conclude.

The article is based on a position paper that the authors prepared for the [International Summit on the SDGs in Africa 2021](#). While published in Spanish, the piece can be read in English via a browser’s translation function.

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