



ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from the Chair

The year 2022 was defined by tremendous progress for ESSA in our impact and influence, in building capacity and capabilities as well as strengthening our financial position.

It was also the second full year of implementation for our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan towards realising our bold vision of high-quality education in sub-Saharan Africa that enables young people to achieve their ambitions and strengthens society. We want to have benefited over 1.4 million students in 500 universities and colleges in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia by 2026. We will achieve this goal by turning research and evidence into action and co-creating evidence based practical solutions with our partners.

Thank you to our community of funders and partners who have contributed to the growth of ESSA. Much appreciation to the ESSA team in Ghana, Kenya, Germany and the UK for their commitment, creativity and skill. I also want to thank my fellow trustees for providing oversight as well as creating such a supportive environment for the ESSA team to deliver quality work and achieve the intended objectives for the year.

My personal highlight for the year was completing our registration in Ghana, a crucial step in strengthening ESSA's ability to achieve impact for young people in Africa. This has already enabled us to deepen existing partnerships in Ghana and elsewhere and help us to continue to build a promising pipeline of significant projects. In the process we have raised ESSA's brand profile and intensified engagement with our key audiences (policymakers, educators, students, employers, and funders), all critical for growing our influence and improving education.

We were delighted to know that more people want to be part of our remarkable growth and impact. In 2022, ESSA commenced six new important partnerships with Imaginable Futures, Partnership for Social Governance and Research (PASGR), Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, EdTech Hub and International Association of Universities. All these partnerships will help us maximise impact and deliver our mission.



Our investment in ESSA will help them create their own research pathways and hone their role in elevating and advocating for African researchers on the continent.”

Imaginable Futures.



It was also a year where we completed the first phase of our partnership with Dubai Cares. This partnership has been transformational for ESSA, catalysing important work in employability, female leadership and faculty challenges and positioning ESSA as a knowledge platform. Their generous support enabled ESSA to increase its visibility and strengthen its core operations. You can read more in this report about what was achieved during the three years of partnership.

In the coming year we plan to continue with our work and take some time to review the successes and challenges of implementing our strategy so far. As you know, at ESSA we are always learning, and it is with this mindset that we will be able to bridge the gap between evidence and data to impact to help young people realise their ambitions and strengthen their societies.

Sincerely

Patrick Dunne

Chair, Board of Trustees, ESSA

About ESSA



Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA) is a charity established and registered in the United Kingdom in 2016 and in Ghana in 2022. Our vision is high-quality education that enables young people in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve their ambitions and strengthens society. ESSA's mission starts with universities and colleges. Driven by the needs of young people, we join up leaders (e.g., educators, funders, policymakers) and provide them with the data and evidence they need to make good decisions and change the system.

2.1 ESSA's values



Evidence-driven

We are driven by data and evidence to find what works best, building an evidence alliance for education in sub-Saharan Africa.



Solutions-focused

We seek the highest impact for young people and educators in sub-Saharan Africa with the cost-effective funds we invest.



Strengthening trust

We are accountable to young people and educators in sub-Saharan Africa.



Always learning

We listen and learn from people's first-hand experiences about education and work across sub-Saharan Africa.

2.2 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

ESSA's vision is a world in which everyone has opportunities to develop their skills and talents and the chance to reach their full potential. We are committed to ensuring that within our work and our organisation, we do all we can to eliminate discriminatory practices,

to improve diversity, inclusivity, and equality of opportunity and to promote understanding and build good relations between people from diverse backgrounds. Our impact is increased by us working collaboratively with and across diverse cultures.

2.3 Our Strategic Goal and Theory of Change

Our goal is to benefit over

1.4 million

students in

500

 universities and colleges in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia by 2026.

ESSA works to connect data and evidence on education from Africa with those who have the power to improve the system, including educators, policymakers and young people themselves.

We work across the student journey, looking at issues of access, quality and transition to work. We also support faculty and researchers working on education, leveraging the power of Africa's universities and colleges to improve outcomes for young people at all levels of education.



Our objectives for 2021–2026 are:

- Connect evidence on delivering quality education with education leaders and policymakers.
- Join up employers with universities and colleges to implement evidence-based approaches to help young people transition into work.
- Contribute to a sustainable knowledge ecosystem for education by raising the profile of African education researchers and increasing access to relevant data.
- Maximise the return on investment of scholarships, loans and grants by building the evidence base and working with funders.

Below is our comprehensive Theory of Change that shows how we will achieve the four objectives.

Please take a look!



Build influential evidence alliance to understand and create evidence for change

- ▶ We strengthen trust and increase learning by building an evidence alliance for education.
- ▶ We co-create policy-relevant evidence.



Turn the evidence into practical solutions for use in education policy and delivery

- ▶ We present high-quality evidence in user friendly formats:
Digital products, tools and research publications.



Identify the biggest issues in tertiary education

- ▶ We focus on quality, access, relevance (transition to work) and knowledge eco-system for education.



Motivate the use of evidence informed solutions in decision making

- ▶ We build networks and create conversations to improve the use of evidence.

The contribution ESSA makes is shown in red. No one organisation can solve these major systemic challenges. ESSA's contribution is all aimed at boosting and joining up the work of others.



Functioning education system for everyone

- Universities and colleges expand **access** and **quality** to meet the needs of young people, and employers.
- Universities and colleges deliver market relevant skills to enable students to **transition to work**.



Impact for young people, universities and colleges, and business

- Employment for young people increases.



Uptake of solutions in education policy and practice

- Educators, decision-makers, young people and investors are increasingly using evidence to drive their decisions, helped by local researchers and civil society.



Youth transition smoothly to decent and productive employment

- Young people have market-relevant skills for productive and decent jobs.
- Businesses have the skills they need to grow.
- It takes less time for young people to find jobs after university or college.

Reflecting on our Partnership with Dubai Cares



دبي العطاء
Dubai Cares

In 2022, our three-year partnership with Dubai Cares ended. This partnership spanned the coronavirus pandemic, significant team expansion and the phenomenal RewirEd Summit in Dubai. Through this transformational grant, we were able to connect with other influential partners and build robust human resources, operations, and finance functions.



Below are just some of the milestones achieved through the Dubai Cares support.

Human Capacity Building in Tertiary Education, Addressing the Faculty Crisis

- ▶ The support from Dubai Cares enabled us to bring African Association of Universities (AAU) and Warwick together to join us in launching the **African Jobs Board**, the first pan-African jobs website for the tertiary education sector in December 2020. Since its start, there have been over 20,000 visits on the platform, with 3,977 applications submitted via the website. This platform contributes to building of human capacity in tertiary education by addressing faculty crisis.
- ▶ We assisted the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) in revising Ghana's tertiary education policy norms by using evidence from the Demographics of African Faculty (DAF) pilot project. The policy norm is a regulatory document used to benchmark, monitor performance, and effectively plan for the resource needs of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ghana.
- ▶ We are now helping GTEC develop a faculty planning tool to help universities plan their student admissions and faculty recruitment, development, and retention. The planning tool will also help GTEC with data collection and resource planning.
- ▶ This fund also enabled us to establish a consortium to raise the profile of the faculty crisis in the East African Community (EAC). The DAF study will help to increase the ability of Higher Education stakeholders to plan and implement evidence-informed responses to improve the numbers of quality faculty within Higher Education Institutions in the EAC.

Knowledge Transfer and Practical Adoption

- ▶ We established a strong community of African scholars, NGOs, and policymakers. A series of workshops with these stakeholders across Africa were hosted, creating high visibility for ESSA as a knowledge platform for and about tertiary education. More important is that we formed a community of practice and developed a methodology to improve access to education data and raise awareness of the value of sharing education data. As result, ESSA is seen as part of local landscape in focus countries and regularly consulted to on matters education.

Women Leading in Tertiary Education

- ▶ Another important milestone through this Dubai Cares grant was the launch of a ground-breaking report on "The State of Women Leading", highlighting the pressing challenges and recommendations in promoting female leadership. This report enabled us to form an alliance of organisations, and we are working with them to integrate the findings into their work. More funding to ESSA would enable us to produce a similar report annually, providing up-to-date information on how both knowledge and policy are changing.

Connecting Business with Higher Education Institutions in sub-Saharan Africa

- ▶ We hosted a panel at RewirEd Summit to share the findings of our study with Quilt.AI on how young people in Africa access tertiary education and transition into work. Prior to this, we had synthesised and published evidence on how universities and colleges can increase the employability of students. This evidence is being used by a collection of six universities within the Education Collaborative to develop effective strategies for improving their careers services, with a particular focus on improving links with the private sector.
- ▶ We were also able to hold a CEO roundtable in Ghana to work through the implications of research for business, understand different priorities and identify productive modes of engagement with universities.



Registering in Ghana

During the financial year, ESSA continued to grow and mature as an organisation, investing in the processes and systems that will ensure that we can create sustained impact. Most notably, we completed our registration in Ghana, a crucial step in strengthening our ability to achieve impact for young people in Africa. An event to launch our registration brought together policymakers, educators, students, and funders, all of whom are critical for improving education.

ESSA's presence as an organisation in Africa serves to strengthen our credibility and facilitate greater African ownership of our mission in the long-term. Conversations during the launch focused on the need for the generation of enough evidence, collaborations, and effective engagement with policymakers in a bid to transform higher education. Also, the need to ensure that the market is ready to absorb graduates.



Transforming education in Africa is based on data generated through the lens of an African within a global context, which is why we need to commend ESSA.”

Professor George Oduro, Professor in Educational Leadership, Institute for Educational Planning and Administration.



We were delighted to welcome **Jonathan Ane** to our Ghana board. Jonathan is the Chief Executive Officer of Kulana in Ghana. He is an experienced executive with over 20 years of working in several industries such as financial services, public sector, and telecommunications. Jonathan holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Warwick. Jonathan will help deepen our fundraising and partnership strategies in Ghana.

In the coming financial year, we will be developing the next steps that will make use of our increased presence in Africa to maximise impact for young people.



ESSA team in the

spotlight



On International Women's Day, our Director of Research and Programmes, Dr Pauline Essah won a Global Women in Leadership Award. The award was in recognition of her contributions to break the bias and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa and globally over the past 20 years.

Our former Head of Programmes and Partnerships, Dr Jennifer Udeh was featured by the Education Collaborative as one of 12 women driving change in Africa's higher education sector.



Impact across our focus areas

The ESSA strategy for 2021-2026 is based on a model of creating a bridge from evidence and data to impact across four focus areas:



Progress was made across the strategy, but the standout areas of success were improving the quality of higher education and strengthening the knowledge ecosystem. Our work on faculty challenges grew and started to have impact on policy while our work to raise the profile of African researchers attracted new partnerships and has set the stage for high impact in the coming years.



We invite you to read more about ESSA's progress in each of the focus areas on the following pages.



5.1 Improving quality of tertiary education

The evidence from our DAF work is already influencing policy.

This area focuses on improving the quality of university and college education. A priority theme for us is to raise the profile of the need for investment in faculty. Evidence shows that Africa has a faculty shortage, with 50% more students per professor compared to the global average. The shortage of faculty has an impact on course quality and relevance.

To address this issue, we connect evidence on delivering quality education with education leaders and policymakers. We ensure that investments to transform universities and colleges are based on data and insightful analysis. Given the impact of COVID-19 on

faculty at Higher Education Institutions, we are also ensuring that data on the effects of the pandemic are part of the conversation.

In the 2021/2022 financial year, our work on faculty challenges in Ghana started to have impact at the practical and policy levels. We commissioned a 'faculty planning tool' in partnership with the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) to improve faculty planning in the tertiary sector. The faculty planning tool (when fully developed) will help universities to plan their student admissions, and faculty recruitment, development, and retention. It will also assist GTEC in institutional data collection and resource planning.

We also assisted GTEC in revising Ghana's tertiary education policy norms using evidence from the Demographics of African Faculty (DAF) pilot project, following a study that ESSA carried out in 2018. The new Ghana tertiary education policy norms (when published) will be used to regulate, benchmark, monitor performance, and effectively plan for the resource needs of HEIs in Ghana.





Our work on faculty challenges in East Africa has gathered momentum. This project is implemented in partnership with the Association of African Universities (**AAU**), the Population Reference Bureau (**PRB**) and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (**IUCEA**) with funding from Carnegie Cooperation of New York. ESSA together with implementing partners attended a stakeholders' engagement forum organised by the IUCEA in Uganda from the 1st to the 2nd of September 2022. The forum discussed strategies for improving data coordination, collection, and management in higher education for evidence-based policy making.

We also used this opportunity to share the Demographics of African Faculty background research, which seeks to understand the nature of faculty demographics and challenges in Higher Education Institutions in the East African Community. Using this background research, we prepared two reports on the impact of COVID-19 on faculty and teaching models and observations and potential solutions faculty challenges in SSA. These reports will be published in 2023 and their contents used to move the conversation on faculty challenges towards concrete solutions.

The **African Jobs Board** continued to gain traction, attracting

20,074
users

and advertising over

3,390
academic and
non-academic jobs

at universities and Higher Education Institutions across Africa. This partnership between the Association of African Universities, the Warwick Employment Group and ESSA is a wonderful example of a practical, partnership-led solution to the problems of faculty recruitment.

We are now at a stage where we have a growing store of useful evidence relating to the quality of higher education in Africa. This year saw a ramping up in communication of this evidence. Highlights included:

- ▶ Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), where we agreed to host a series of webinars on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. We successfully hosted two of these webinars under the themes, *'Quality Assuring Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions,'* and *'Achieving Equitable Access to Higher Education Post COVID-19 Pandemic.'* These webinars attracted over 200 people in attendance.
- ▶ Moderating a panel discussion at the prestigious Comparative and International Education Society Conference. We also co-presented with our partners, the International Association of Universities (IAU) and the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. The presentations focused on *'Unpacking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on, and responses from, Higher Education Institutions: global, West and East African perspectives.'*
- ▶ In 2023, we plan to have more of these webinars to sustain conversations on the impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education Institutions.





We need to have a conversation around the future of higher education institutions in the continent. Lessons from studies suggest that higher education institutions need to be agile to navigate the challenges of disruptive pandemics like COVID-19.”

Dr Martin Atela,
Programme Manager,
Research and Policy
Programme, PASGR.



Marking International Women's Day 2022, with the European Women Rectors Association (**EWORA**), and IAU, by launching a global conversation on women in leadership in education. During the webinar, evidence and data from the research were shared, including findings from **the ESSA State of Women Leading Report**, the **European She figures 2021 – Statistics on Gender in Research and Innovation** by EWORA, and **information from the IAU World Higher Education Database**. The event brought together insights from 105 policymakers, educators and female leaders.

At one of the first conferences since the start of the pandemic, the RewirEd Summit in Dubai, we hosted a hybrid panel debate to discuss the point of tertiary education concerning equipping young people with employability skills. Over 2,000 participants attended the summit in person, and more than 450 speakers

from 60 countries shared their ideas and expertise on 'rewiring' education. To sustain this conversation, we also generated three blogs from this event; two were posted on the ESSA website and one on the **UNESCO World Education**. Readers of these blogs opined that tertiary education should step away from job skills. That life skills, personality development, research and innovation should be the core of what tertiary education works on with the learners and funders.

In the coming financial year, we will be sharing data on faculty challenges in East Africa with education leaders and policy makers across the region and working with them to understand what actions can lead to change. We will also be looking to build momentum for this issue across the continent by engaging in cross-continental forums alongside our partners.



5.2 Strengthening the knowledge ecosystem

AERD is now the go-to platform for academics, researchers, and policymakers.

African research can be used to improve education at all levels and other issues in society. But research outputs are disproportionately small in comparison to other continents. They are also dispersed across a wide range of outlets and not easily accessible. We want to change this.

This area focuses on advancing a more open, quality, and locally led research ecosystem that provides African researchers with the necessary conditions to thrive. We contribute to a sustainable knowledge ecosystem for education by raising the profile of African education researchers and increasing access to relevant data.

This financial year saw our work supporting African education researchers rocket in terms of its visibility and influence. The year started with a feature on the African Education Research Database (AERD) – a collaboration between ESSA and the REAL Centre at the University of Cambridge – appearing in the Financial Times, with the support of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The feature titled '**Listening to African Researchers**', affirmed the need to have African research at the centre of informing investments in education research, policy, and practice.

The profile of the database was further raised through a seminar at the REAL Centre and the publication of a **blog** on the UKFIET website that included 2021 Conference recommendations on why we need to fund African research and education researchers.

Together with REAL Centre, we updated the AERD which now includes a bibliometric analysis of over **5,000** publications produced by African education researchers to increase the visibility of African research.

This database contains articles published between 2010 and 2021 in journals with international coverage. The platform continues to grow in its usefulness and influence. ESSA and REAL Centre will continue to expand the online **African Education Research Database**.

Our work with the REAL Centre has been further accelerated through two new partnerships. With support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, backed by a commitment of \$1.5 million over the next two years, we are raising the profile of researchers working in Early Childhood Development. The financial commitment will ensure greater awareness and investment in research conducted by Africa-based researchers about education and development for the youngest children in Africa.

With the support of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we are identifying and connecting African education researchers working to improve the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy of African primary schoolchildren. Over the next 1-2 years we will be mapping and convening researchers in these fields, focusing on Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal, and Mozambique.



African researchers and their research work must be at the forefront of informing improvements in foundational learning.”

Professor Pauline Rose,
Director of the
REAL Centre.

Like the AERD, our work on the "Unlocking Data" initiative received increased interest from stakeholders in the education knowledge ecosystem. The year saw a technical partnership between ESSA, Zizi Afrique, the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis and the Kenya TVET Authority to pilot the data mapping methodology. The goal of the partnership was to increase the effectiveness of the TVET Authority in their efforts to "unlock" TVET data, increasing its availability and use for analysis that will improve education for young people.



The "Unlocking Data" initiative was officially launched on 17th November 2021 following a series of workshops. The initiative, which aims to create a community of practice that connects individuals and organisations for the purpose of learning, sharing, and using education data to inform policy and practice, is led by nine steering committee members from five organisations (eBASE Africa, Open Burkina Faso, Zizi Afrique, the EdTech Hub, the Centre of Education Research and Training (CERT), and the University of Malawi).

Recent monitoring and evaluation evidence of the initiative shows that our collaboration has had tangible impacts on TVET data processes and institutional capacity in Kenya, assisting the Kenya TVET Authority in identifying data gaps and developing strategies to fill these gaps.

Below are some of the recorded outcomes from the pilot initiative:

- ✓ The constitution of a technical working group by the State Department for Technical Training to facilitate strong participation and collaboration among the key stakeholders. The group is also responsible for disseminating TVET data and information.
- ✓ Four project reports, i.e., the TVET Mapping Process report, TVET Mapping report, TVET Knowledge report, and TVET Mapping Implementation report.
- ✓ Whole Youth Development Policy Briefs and TVET Data Mapping Reports **launched**.
- ✓ Capacity development of the ministry staff working on the initiative.
- ✓ Formation of collaborations and communities of practice between non-state, public, and private sector actors.

Strengthening the education knowledge ecosystem: the role of the AERD in 2022

This year, the AERD continued to serve as the "go-to" platform for education research in Africa and beyond. It has been used to inform research, policy, and programmes aimed at improving the quality of education for young people. For example, the **UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education** used it as recourse in their digitalisation in education report and the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (**GEEAP**) Secretariat used it for review of literature for their update of the "Smart Buys": *Cost-effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning Levels*, among others.

In addition, the evidence synthesis produced using publications available in the AERD has served as a useful tool for funders of education in designing programmes and funding strategies for education researchers in SSA. For example, a group of funders (including Imaginable Futures, Echidna Giving, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Porticus) who are involved in establishing the African Research Consortium) used two of the AERD-focused publications as the background documents for organising the **Forum for Education Research in/for/by Africa in April 2022**.

Imaginable Futures also engaged directly with ESSA in developing their strategy for the Forum and to help them invite early career and female African researchers to this important event. The Forum sought to understand what it would take to shift "power" to locally led and based African education researchers, pioneer new realms of education research, support dissemination and uptake of education research, challenge conventional norms long exhibited in the aid space, and demonstrate new standards at the heart of 'funders' relationships with local education researchers. Providing support to African-based education researchers will lead to the production and uptake of policy-relevant research, which will subsequently lead to an improved and quality education system for young people.

In the coming financial year, we will be focused on making rapid progress with mapping and convening communities of researchers focused on early childhood development and foundational literacy and numeracy. We will then move to connecting these researchers to professional development opportunities.

We will also be looking to expand and strengthen our work on data access, supporting those who are working to 'unlock' education data in their own countries.



5.3 Improving the transition from education to work

More people want to know about our research on what works in universities and colleges to improve transitions to employment.

According to PRB, by 2030 young Africans are expected to make up 42% of the world's youth and account for 75% of those under 35 years in Africa. However, most of these youth will struggle to find decent jobs. A major contributor to unemployment is the significant gap between the skills developed in tertiary education and the skills requirements of the labour market in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

This area looks into how universities and colleges in sub-Saharan Africa can help students transition to jobs. We are joining up employers with universities and colleges to implement evidence-based approaches to help young people transition into work.

The focus of this work is on convening and opening conversations on how universities and colleges can work better with employers to help young people fulfil their ambitions.

Together with the Education Collaborative in Ghana, we held a hybrid in-person and virtual industry **roundtable** that attracted around 70 participants, including representatives of education institutions, employers/CEOs of large corporations, funders, and friends of ESSA.

We shared findings from research that has been undertaken with the Education Collaborative at Ashesi University, including insights from interviews with industry and Higher Education Institutions in Ghana, Rwanda, and Burkina Faso. This conversation explored the challenges that universities and employers face in collaborating with each other and has set the stage for future events to strengthen relationships for collaboration.



I believe that ESSA and some human resource or employment bodies can be able to gather information on the relevant skills and trends that are required in the labour market.”

Professor Goski Alabi,
President, Laweh
Open University
College.

To engage more audiences, we participated on the Employment and Education panel during the Forum for **Global Challenges 2022 on 3 May 2022**. We shared our work on young people's transition from education into work and learnt innovative solutions in Kenya and the UK from the session.

In the next financial year, we will be seeking opportunities to do more to bridge the gap from evidence to action, ensuring that education leaders and employers are using this evidence to improve their support to young people.



5.4 Increasing access to tertiary education

Young people visit our African Scholarship Hub to learn about scholarship opportunities.

This area focuses on increasing access to university and college. We know that less than 10% of young people in Africa join university or college, despite the fact that the global average is 40%, with the cost of education being one of the main barriers.

We are helping others to maximise the return on investment in their scholarships programmes by building the evidence base and working with funders. We help young people to find the opportunities that are right for them – improving young people’s access to education.

This year, we were excited to revamp and promote the **African Scholarship Hub (ASH)**, an online portal that brings together students and scholarship providers. The Hub is also now easier to navigate. According to data from our website analytics, a total of 1,883 users (prospective students) visited the ASH in 2021, with most of the users based in Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa. Users of the ASH website indicated in our 2021 stakeholder survey that the "Tips and Advice" section of the website is useful in their scholarship application process. Two students reported that they successfully applied for and received scholarships through the ASH platform.



Your African Scholarship Hub has helped me so much in the past, reading scholarship tips and information then motivated me a lot.”

Awe Ayodeji Lucky,
a user of African Scholarship Hub,
Nigeria.

Building on work from the previous year, together with NORRAG and UNHCR we co-hosted a webinar on 15th February 2022 to share findings from our work on advancing refugee education. The webinar discussed findings of our report on **Complementary Pathways through Education for Refugees in the West and Central Africa Region**, which mapped out refugee education pathways and access to higher education and training in 21 selected West and Central African countries. Over 150 participants joined the webinar from across Africa, Europe, and the Americas. We had great presentations from the ESSA team, UNHCR and a young refugee whose personal story was really the highlight of the event.

The research evidence from this report was used to inform UNHCR’s internal programme and policy planning. It also led to ESSA being invited to join the Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways, where we can influence education policy through evidence.





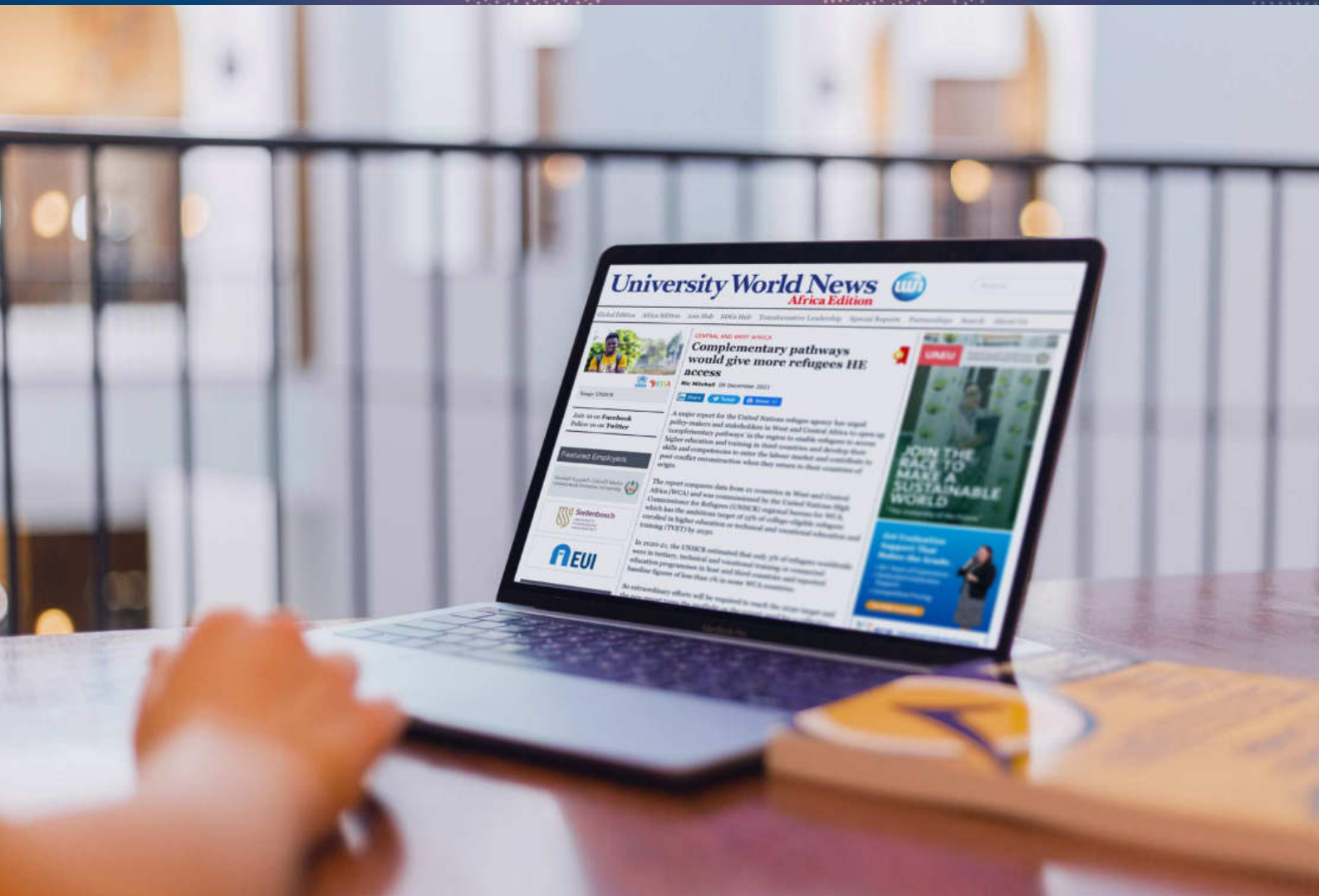
ESSA has considerable experience in gathering evidence in sub-Saharan Africa, including mapping scholarships and scholarship providers for African students as published in UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report for 2020. Complementary pathways focusing on education enable the transfer of refugees to a third country specifically to improve their education and enable the refugees to support themselves."

Dr Pauline Essah,
Director, Research
and Programmes.



In the next financial year, we will be maintaining our African Scholarship Hub to support young people in their search for scholarships. We will continue to look for opportunities to ensure that policymakers and education leaders are using data and evidence to ensure inclusion and quality as they plan for scaling up tertiary education.

ESSA in the news



During this reporting period, ESSA was prominently featured in various media as a leader in matters of higher education. Below are some highlights:

FINANCIAL TIMES

The ESSA and REAL Centre advertisement in the Financial Times newspaper on 'African Education Research Database' was sponsored by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The advertisement titled '[Listening to African Researchers,](#)' which appeared in the Financial Times special report 'Investing in Education,' reaffirmed the importance of African research in informing investments in education research, policy, and practice.



The Standard newspaper in Kenya published two opinion pieces written by the ESSA team.

1. In this opinion article titled '[Administrative data can inform Kenya's rollout of competency-based curriculum system,](#)' ESSA implores curriculum implementers in Kenya to rely on research and administrative data to inform the new education policies.
2. [What we must do to step up women leadership](#) featured evidence from ESSA's 2021 Women Leading Report.



Is tertiary education still worth it? In this blog, ESSA asserts that universities and colleges can harness the potential of the next generation, but that radical change is needed to bring their world into meaningful contact with the world of employers.

University
World News
THE GLOBAL WINDOW ON HIGHER EDUCATION



The University World News sought the opinion of ESSA on matters of higher education.

[Complementary pathways would give more refugees higher education access.](#)

Dr Pauline Essah, ESSA's Director of Research and Programmes, told University World News that the charity had considerable experience in gathering evidence in sub-Saharan Africa, including mapping scholarships and scholarship providers for African students as published in UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report for 2020.



ESSA's blog published by UKFIET expounds on [why we need to fund African research and education researchers.](#)



The Times Higher Education featured ESSA in a story titled '[How can Africa's vast appetite for higher education be met?](#)' In the article, four of our team members shared their perspectives on ways to increase institutions in Africa to meet the demand for higher education.

Partners and funders who worked with us in 2021/2022



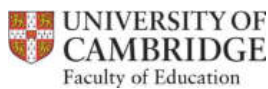
We would not be who we are today without our partners. Many thanks to you.



BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation



Ghana Tertiary Education Commission



Financial report

Income

ESSA's income for 2021/22 was £1,286,647, an increase of 62% on 2020/21.

Our income predominantly comes from grants from larger donors, with whom we have very strong relationships, and we develop the projects in partnership. During ESSA's start up and initial growth phases, we received very generous funding from two particularly supportive donors – Robert Bosch Stiftung and Dubai Cares; the first grants from whom finished during this financial year.

Their support has not only been monetary but has also enabled us to pilot new areas of research and use the results to approach other donors and partners to expand that research to more countries or to explore our findings in greater depth.

Two new funding partnerships which developed via this route this year are with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Both grants are primarily supporting our work on raising the profile of African researchers.

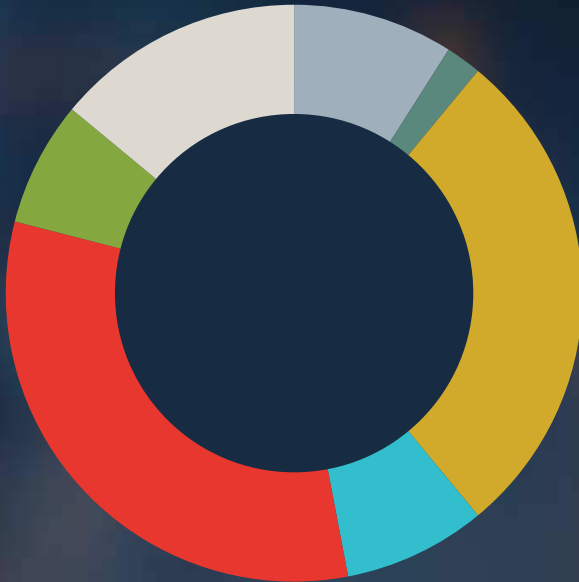
We have also continued to update previous funding partners on our developments and built a number of promising new relationships over the past year leading to a strong pipeline of potential donors engaging with our strategy and future plans.

In addition, whilst much of the funding we have received in the past has been restricted, we are continuing to diversify our funding base through approaches to potential corporate partners and those open to investing in the continued development of the organisation and hope that this will also lead to unrestricted support. We were particularly grateful for the support of Imaginable Futures this year in this regard.

Our approach to fundraising received a significant boost with the appointment of a dedicated Bid Writer for the duration of the 2022/23 financial year and following the launch of Education Sub Saharan Africa LBG in Ghana, we received some funding to kickstart our fundraising from African donors. We appointed a Business and Programme Development Manager towards the end of the year to spearhead this initiative.

ESSA's fundraising practice is in accordance with the Fundraising Regulator's guidance Code on Fundraising Practice. No complaints have ever been received concerning ESSA's fundraising activities. ESSA has not had any practice of unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy, of unreasonable persistence nor has it placed undue pressure on anybody to give money. We do not work with commercial participators.

Expenditure



9%

Raising Funds

2%

Access to university and college for young people

28%

Quality of university and college education

8%

Young people's transition from education into work

32%

Building a knowledge ecosystem for education

7%

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

14%

Increasing the influence of our research

Total expenditure for the year was £1,050,997, with 86% of this funded from restricted income. Expenditure increased by 21% as we continued to expand our work in our four focus areas, particularly the quality of university and college education, through our work funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, and building a knowledge ecosystem for education, funded by the Conrad N. Hilton and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundations. Our expenditure on raising funds was primarily staff time to research, reach out to and build relationships with donors. In order to preserve the time of the research team to focus on their core roles, we appointed a paid Bid Writer starting in October 2021.

Reserves

The charity's reserves policy states that funds should be maintained at the level that covers three months of core organisation expenditure, including salaries. This equates to approximately £200k at present. The trustees consider that reserves set at this level ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

These reserves would typically be unrestricted reserves and the charity's financial planning and fundraising seeks to grow unrestricted reserves, but we have set our policy to reflect that core costs can also be covered by restricted funding. Over the past year, Robert Bosch Stiftung and Dubai Cares have been notably supportive in funding core organisation costs.

As at 30 September 2022, reserves were £57,457 and £820,088 for unrestricted and restricted funds, respectively. Of those restricted reserves, at least £290k from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York funding can be used to fund core /operating costs and salaries, so total reserves available to cover core costs are around £347k, the equivalent of approximately 5 months' running costs.

Going concern

Trustees have considered the financial sustainability of the organisation, including fundraising prospects and cashflow projections to June 2024, and are satisfied that it is appropriate for the accounts for the financial year 2021/22 to be prepared on a going concern basis.

Structure, governance and management



Legal structure

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated under the Companies Act 2006 as a private company and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 4 April 2016 (Company Number 10101086). It was entered on the Registers of Charities on 5 May 2016.



Selection and appointment of trustees

Suitable candidates are identified as being possible trustees for the Board. The first step in recruiting trustees is for the Board and leadership team to establish the search criteria and agree a selection process dependent upon the need. For the last three trustees this involved the appointment of a search firm to identify a shortlist of candidates for the board to select from with input from the leadership team and others. Telephone referencing is also undertaken personally by the Chair before an appointment is formalised.

It is our aim to have a diverse and inclusive board, and this is reflected in the current membership.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company.



Trustee induction and training

All new trustees receive a structured induction programme, covering all aspects of the role and the organisation. As part of this they are given copies of ESSA's Memorandum and Articles of Association, governance document, strategy, business plan, the previous year's annual accounts, the current year's budget, code of conduct and any relevant committees' terms of reference.

New trustees must complete and sign a declaration of interest, anti-bribery policy, fit and proper person's declaration and ESSA's code of conduct.



Risk management

The charity operates a comprehensive annual planning and budgeting process, which is approved by the trustees. Performance is monitored through the use of financial targets. Reports are made to the trustees which compare actual results against the phased budget, and which link financial performance with resource and activity levels. ESSA has taken a dynamic approach to budgeting from inception which ensures the organisation is responsive to change as it goes through the year.

The charity has risk management policies and procedures through which risks arising from the existing operations and strategic developments are identified and evaluated. Significant risks are highlighted for consideration and monitoring by the Audit & Risk Committee and reported to the board of trustees. All major risks to which ESSA is exposed, which have been identified by these procedures, have been reviewed.

RISK

MITIGATION STRATEGY

Over-dependence on any particular income source would put our work at risk if it was lost.

- New priority funding prospects identified and secured.
- Business and Programme Development Manager appointed to focus on diversifying income, especially through corporate partnerships.
- Improved donor/pipeline management using Salesforce CRM.

A high turnover of staff including loss of key personnel which would result in a loss of experience, skills and contacts and could have an operational impact on key projects and priorities.

- Remuneration for key employees pitched slightly higher than would normally be expected for a small organisation to attract and retain them. Detailed appraisals are carried out, pay is reviewed annually, working conditions are constantly reviewed and ESSA conducts exit interviews.
- Received directive from board of trustees to ensure we are slightly over rather than under-staffed to maintain continuity of delivery and avoid staff being overstretched.

Foreign currency risk arising from income received in a currency that is different to that of expenditure.

- Continue to take advantage of natural hedge by paying invoices from the bank account of their currency i.e., dollars invoice paid from dollar account.
- Increased frequency of bank balance revaluations.
- Ensure donors are apprised of any significant exchange rate fluctuations so that budget revisions can be agreed, if needed.

Global resilience/recession.

- Diversification of donors to minimise the impact of global recession on a particular sector or country.

Organisation structure

ESSA's CEO is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. Powers are delegated to the Senior Leadership Team under a schedule of reserved powers approved by the Board. ESSA's Senior Leadership Team is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Finance and Operations and Director of Research and Programmes.

Remuneration policy for Senior Leadership Team

A Remuneration Committee was established during this financial year. The pay of the charity's CEO and Senior Leadership Team is recommended by the Remuneration Committee and approved by the board of trustees. The salary is set to be competitive and benchmarked against similar charitable organisations.

Corporate Directory

Trustees

Patrick Dunne, Chair
Christopher Foy, Treasurer
Dolika Banda
Joel Kibazo
Nancy Matimu
Kendi Ntwiga
Joachim Rogall

Senior Leadership Team

Lucy Heady, Chief Executive Officer
Clare Jenkins, Director of Finance and Operations
Pauline Essah, Director of Research and Programmes

Charity number
Company number
Registered office

1166958
10101086
3rd Floor
Chancery House
St Nicholas Way
Sutton
Surrey
SM1 1JB

Auditors

Crowe U.K. LLP
55 Ludgate Hill
London
EC4M 7JW

Bankers

C. Hoare & Co
37 Fleet Street
London
EC4P 4DQ

Solicitors

Bates Wells Braithwaite
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Education Sub Saharan Africa for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- ▶ Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- ▶ Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- ▶ Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- ▶ State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- ▶ Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of Information to Auditors

Insofar as each of the trustees of the charity at the date of approval of this report is aware there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditor in connection with preparing the audit report) of which the charity's auditor is unaware. Each trustee has taken all of the steps that he/she should have taken as a trustee in order to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information. This report has been prepared under the exemptions available to small companies under the Companies Act 2006.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Crowe U.K. LLP be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

The trustees' report was approved on behalf of the board of trustees.



Patrick Dunne
Chair of Trustees
Dated: 8 June 2023

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF EDUCATION SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Education Sub Saharan Africa ('the charitable company') for the year ended 30 September 2022 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, Balance sheet, Statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 30 September 2022- and of its income and expenditure, for the year then ended.
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

- ▶ The information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- ▶ The directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- ▶ Adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept. or
- ▶ The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns. or
- ▶ Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made. or
- ▶ We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit. or
- ▶ The trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 22, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at:

www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charitable company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charitable company for fraud. The laws and regulations we considered in this context for the UK operations were General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption legislation, taxation legislation and employment legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of income, allocation of income and expenditure to restricted funds, and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management and the board of trustees

about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission, detailed substantive testing of income and expenditure, and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Dipesh Chhatralia
Senior Statutory Auditor
For and on behalf of Crowe U.K. LLP
Statutory Auditor
London

26 June 2023

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating Income and Expenditure Account)

For the Year Ended 30 September 2022

				2021/22	2020/21
		Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations and grants	2	1,111,055	159,341	1,270,396	751,333
Provision of services		-	15,935	15,935	42,917
Other income		-	316	316	347
Total income		1,111,055	175,592	1,286,647	794,597
Expenditure					
Raising funds	3	51,966	43,823	95,789	93,597
Charitable activities	3	852,207	103,001	955,208	778,025
Total expenditure		904,173	146,824	1,050,997	871,622
Net income/(expenditure)		206,882	28,768	235,650	(77,025)
Transfers between funds		19,598	(19,598)	-	-
Net movement in funds		226,480	9,170	235,650	(77,025)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds as at 1 October 2021	10	593,608	48,287	641,895	718,920
Total funds as at 30 September 2022		820,088	57,457	877,545	641,895

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet

As at 30 September 2022

		2021/22	2020/21
	Note	£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	7	1,861	3,509
Total fixed assets	7	1,861	3,509
Current assets			
Debtors	8	117,732	371,825
Cash at bank and in hand		888,895	309,652
Total current assets		1,006,627	681,477
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	9	(130,944)	(43,091)
Net current assets		875,683	638,386
Net assets		877,545	641,895
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted funds	10	820,088	593,608
Unrestricted funds	10	57,457	48,287
Total funds		877,545	641,895

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the trustees on 8 June 2023.



Patrick Dunne
Chair of Trustees

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 September 2022

		2021/22	2020/21
	Note	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash generated from (used by) operating activities	12	508,143	(435,403)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets			392
Sale of tangible fixed assets			
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		-	392
Net cash used in financing activities			
			-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		508,143	(435,011)
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		309,652	784,298
Unrealised gain/(loss) from exchange rate changes on cash held in foreign currency		71,100	(39,635)
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		888,895	309,652

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 September 2022

1. Accounting policies

Registration

Education Sub Saharan Africa is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 3rd Floor, Chancery House, St Nicholas Way, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 1JB.

1.1 Accounting convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Articles of Incorporation, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound value.

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the rate of exchange prevailing at the balance sheet date. Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the rate prevailing at the date of the transactions. All differences are taken through the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.2 Going concern

Trustees have considered the financial sustainability of the organisation, including fundraising prospects and cashflow projections to June 2024, and are satisfied that ESSA can be considered a going concern for the purposes of the 2021/22 financial year accounts and so have prepared the financial accounts on that basis.

Trustees specifically considered the position were fundraising to be less successful than the prudent forecast. Trustees reviewed a worst-case option of no further funding and note that ESSA has already secured funding that will last until at least March 2024 at the current cost run rate.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds subject to specific expenditure instructions which are laid out by the donor that fall within the wider purposes of the charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Income from grants is recognised on an accruals basis and included in the Statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income, when receipt is probable, and when it can be measured reliably. Grants that are subject to performance-related conditions or subject to funder conditions related to the timing of expenditure are deferred until those conditions are met.

Donated goods and services are recognised as income when they are received and used by ESSA. The goods and services are measured at fair value to ESSA.

1.5 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Grants are recognised as a liability once the charity has a legal or a constructive obligation to make a distribution to a third party.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings.

Support costs have all been allocated between governance costs and other support costs. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to statutory audit and legal fees together with an apportionment of overhead and support costs.

Services received on an 'in kind' basis are accounted for at the cost the charity would otherwise have to pay for the same services.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Computers 25% straight line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

1.8 Financial instruments

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.11 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The following matters contain assumptions or estimates affecting income at the balance sheet date:

Note 2 Donations and grants – Grants receivable

Note 2 Donations and grants – Gifts in kind

1.9 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

1.10 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2. Donations and grants

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total	Total
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£	£	£
Gifts and donations	26,200	46,097	72,297	31,288
Grants receivable	1,022,180	113,244	1,135,424	628,989
Gifts in kind	62,675	-	62,675	91,056
	1,111,055	159,341	1,270,396	751,333

3. Analysis of expenditure

	Activities directly undertaken	Grant funding of activities	Support costs	Total	Total
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£	£	£	£
Raising funds:					
Costs of raising donation & grant income	88,127	-	7,662	95,789	93,597
Charitable activities:					
Access to university and college for young people	15,577	6,000	1,703	23,280	95,135
Quality of university and college education	124,205	171,778	23,836	319,819	126,353
Young people's transition from education into work	83,933		6,811	90,744	107,502
Building a knowledge ecosystem for education	221,191	113,703	27,242	362,136	202,200
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	70,915		5,959	76,874	73,263
Increasing the influence of our research	141,537		11,918	153,455	133,937
Foreign exchange losses/(gains)			(71,100)	(71,100)	39,635
Total	745,485	291,481	14,031	1,050,997	871,622

Grants were awarded to 8 (2020/21: 0) organisations; no grants were made to individuals. A full list of recipients is provided below:

Organisation	2021/22	£
 Ghana Tertiary Education Commission		16,915
 ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES اتحاد الجامعات الأفريقية	Association of African Universities	23,944
 Inter University Council for East Africa		75,967
 UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE Faculty of Education	REAL Centre at the University of Cambridge	101,948
 PRB	Population Reference Bureau	54,952
 Zizi Afrique Foundation	Zizi Afrique Foundation	11,755
 Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny		3,000
 IEPA	Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the University of Cape Coast	3,000
		291,481

Future commitments

Future commitments relating to charitable work carried out by other organisations on behalf of ESSA, amount to £394,936 (2020/21: 0). These represent contracts signed before 30 September 2022 for payments in future years.

4. Support and governance costs

Support costs

	Raising funds	Charitable activities	Total	Total
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£	£	£
Personnel costs	5,094	40,760	45,854	67,447
Other support costs	2,568	20,547	23,115	35,714
Governance costs	-	16,162	16,162	17,733
Foreign exchange losses/(gains)	-	(71,100)	(71,100)	39,635
Total expenditure	7,662	6,369	14,031	160,529

Governance costs

	Raising funds	Charitable activities	Total	Total
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£	£	£
Legal and professional	-	4,042	4,042	6,211
Audit	-	12,120	12,120	11,522
Total expenditure	-	16,162	16,162	17,733

5. Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration during the year, expenses of £2,176 were paid to 1 trustee (2020/21: 0).

6. Staff costs

	Total	Total
	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Staff costs:		
Wages and salaries	540,820	427,880
Social security costs	40,184	42,930
Pension costs	8,068	6,369
Total expenditure	589,072	477,179

The following number of employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) during the year between:

	2021/22	2020/21
	No.	No.
£60,000 – £69,999	1	2
£70,000 – £79,999	1	-
£80,000 – £89,999	-	-
£90,000 – £99,999	-	-
£100,000 – £109,999	1	1

The total employee benefits including pension contributions and employer's national insurance for key management personnel were £313,875 (2020/21: £247,256).

The average number of employees (headcount based on number of staff employed) during the year was:

	2021/22	2020/21
	No.	No.
Management and administration	5	4
Project management and support	10	6
Total	15	10

7. Tangible fixed assets

	Computers
	£
Cost:	
At 1 October 2021	6,756
At 30 September 2022	6,756
Depreciation & impairment:	
At 1 October 2021	3,247
Charge for year	1,648
At 30 September 2022	4,895
Carrying Amount:	
At 30 September 2022	1,861
At 30 September 2021	3,509

8. Debtors

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Prepayments	561	296
Accrued income	117,171	371,529
	117,732	371,825

9. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Taxation and social security costs	1,587	1,818
Trade creditors	924	19,009
Other creditors	4,313	324
Accruals and deferred income	124,120	21,940
	130,944	43,091

10. Movements in funds

	Brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers In/(Out)	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds					
Total unrestricted funds	48,287	175,592	(146,824)	(19,598)	57,457
Restricted Funds:					
Robert Bosch Stiftung	82,353	(19,598)	(82,353)	19,598	-
Dubai Cares	308,712	3,405	(312,117)	-	-
Quilt.AI	-	62,675	(62,675)	-	-
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	9,420	1,140	(10,560)	-	-
Carnegie Corporation of New York (DAF EAC)	193,123	107,409	(189,077)	-	111,455
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	-	611,204	(193,763)	-	417,441
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation		318,620	(47,004)	-	271,616
Global Social Impact Challenge		26,200	(6,624)	-	19,576
Total restricted funds	593,608	1,111,055	(904,173)	-	820,088
TOTAL FUNDS	641,895	1,286,647	(1,050,997)	19,598	877,545

The Robert Bosch Stiftung: [Germany] seed-funded ESSA in 2016 with a €1.05m commitment to help establish ESSA as a credible agent working to improve access to education and to improve education quality in sub-Saharan Africa. The funding was broken into two tranches with the funding period for the second tranche running from January 2020 to December 2021.

Dubai Cares: In 2020/21 we received the final \$500k tranche of our \$1.5m programme with Dubai Cares. The funding covers four strands of work: (1) human capacity building in tertiary education, (2) employability and business engagement, (3) leadership and managerial

skills of leaders in tertiary education and (4) knowledge transfer and practical adoption. The work was completed in 2021/22.

IDRC: This is a small piece of consultancy work focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on universities in West Africa and how these universities are responding.

Quilt.AI: This represents the value of the organisation's pro-bono expertise in artificial intelligence donated to gather insights into students' journeys online and the barriers and enablers to attending university/ college.

Carnegie Corporation of New York (DAF EAC): This is a two-year project funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York to expand our previous DAF work in Ghana to the East African Community as part of a consortium with the Association of African Universities, the Inter-University Council for East Africa and Population Reference Bureau.

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation: This project focuses on understanding the ecosystem of Early Childhood Development (ECD) researchers and their needs in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (with desk-based research for Mozambique). ESSA is collaborating with the Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre to implement this project.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: This project seeks to identify and connect African education researchers who are working to improve the foundational learning of African primary school children. ESSA is partnering with the REAL Centre again to map researchers, their institutions and the evidence they are producing in four countries: Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania.

Global Social Challenge: This was a grant given for the purpose of kickstarting our African-based fundraising activity following the launch of ESSA LBG in Ghana.

Statement of funds – Prior Year

	Brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Carried forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds					
Total unrestricted funds	42,231	74,552	(68,496)	-	48,287
Restricted Funds:					
Robert Bosch Stiftung	276,343	44,699	(238,689)	-	82,353
Robert Bosch Stiftung gift in kind	-	16,750	(16,750)	-	-
Dubai Cares	376,225	371,529	(439,042)	-	308,712
Pilot Scholarship Impact Hub	24,121	-	(24,121)	-	-
Quilt.AI	-	74,306	(74,306)	-	-
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	-	14,812	(5,392)	-	9,420
Carnegie Corporation of New York (DAF EAC)	-	197,949	(4,826)	-	193,123
Total restricted funds	676,689	720,045	(803,126)	-	593,608
TOTAL FUNDS	718,920	794,597	(871,622)	-	641,895

Robert Bosch Stiftung gift in kind: This represents a secondment for the position of 'founding director', who has worked at ESSA since our start in 2016 and finished in December 2020. The individual devoted 80% of his time to working for ESSA and the financial value of this secondment is estimated to be £16,750 p.a.

Pilot Scholarship Impact Hub: This programme was established in 2018 to increase the impact of scholarships for African students, funded by an individual donor and the Schaufler Foundation [Germany]. Our research featured in UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report on Inclusion and Education, as the official monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goal 4b on scholarships.

11. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Total
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 30 September 2022 are represented by:				
Tangible assets	1,861	-	1,861	3,509
Current assets/(liabilities)	55,596	820,088	875,684	638,386
	57,457	820,088	877,545	641,895

12. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021/22	2020/21
	£	£
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	235,650	(77,025)
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation charge	1,648	1,774
Loss/(gain) on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	(347)
Unrealised (gain)/loss from exchange rate changes on cash held in foreign currency	(71,100)	39,635
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	254,092	(371,723)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	87,853	(27,717)
Net cash used by operating activities	508,143	(435,403)





13. Related party transactions

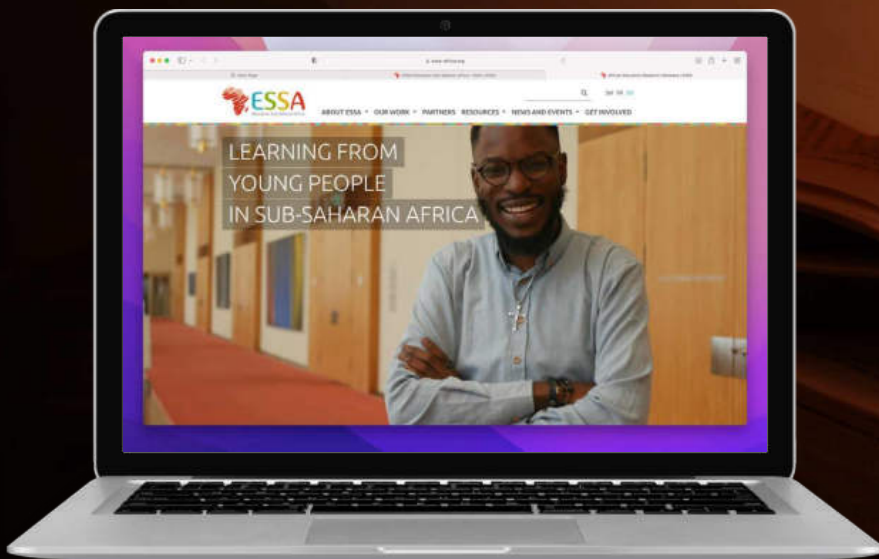
Donations totalling £35,778 were received from related parties during the year.

Connect with us

If you are an employer, funder, researcher, educator, policymaker, or young person and want to collaborate, access evidence, and support our work, please visit the ESSA website to find out how you can join us.



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ANNUAL REPORT

AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
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