



Action on Funding for African-led Education Research

This virtual conference is organised by the charity [Education Sub Saharan Africa \(ESSA\)](#) and the [Research for Equitable Access and Learning \(REAL\) Centre](#) at the University of Cambridge.

Why?

The relevance of high-quality research evidence in addressing development challenges is not in doubt. Through research - including those catalogued in the [African Education Research Database](#) developed by ESSA and the REAL Centre, insights and new ideas are generated to enhance understandings of different socio-economic issues and solve pertinent problems facing communities.

Nevertheless, researchers – especially those based in Africa – are facing huge financial challenges which hinder their ability to provide evidence to inform education debates and decision-making. Evidence from the database indicates that only about 10% of education studies in this context receive funding ([Asare, Mitchell and Rose, 2020](#)). To facilitate the achievement of continental and global development goals as stipulated in policy documents such as the African Union's [CESA 16-25](#) and [Agenda 2063](#), issues around research funding need greater prominence in national, continental and global policy discussions.

The need for greater investment in African education research was strongly verbalised at the [Leaders in African Education Research](#) workshop organised in Ethiopia by the REAL Centre in partnership with the Centre for Global Development and the University of Addis Ababa, in June 2019. This workshop brought together stakeholders from across Africa to discuss issues of research priorities and the challenges researchers were facing.

However, this need for additional research funding is even more urgent now, considering the educational challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The widespread closures of education institutions and the consequent effects, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, calls for increased efforts to understand these challenges and mitigate their effects, to avoid losing the considerable progress that has been made in education over the past two decades. The specific details of the virtual conference are provided below.

When?

24th June 2021 at 1pm – 3pm (GMT). Representatives of research funders may be available for an additional 30 minutes, for further interaction with attendees.

Where?

Virtual / online, via Zoom conferencing. Please register via [this link](#). Additional information will be emailed to registered attendees before the event.

For whom?

The event will bring together education stakeholders (including researchers, donors, policy actors and practitioners) to share ideas on ways forward for funding African-led education research.

Aims and objectives:

This conference will provide a forum for presentation and an interactive, two-way discussion of:

1. Funding opportunities, requirements and expectations of funders based in and/or outside Africa.
2. Barriers researchers face in accessing funding and the strategies they use to overcome them.
3. How funding policies can be improved to better support researchers based in Africa.
4. Whether/how funding is aligned to education policies and priorities in Africa.

Capturing the views of participants

In addition to four plenary presentations, participants will have the opportunity to engage throughout the sessions. They will be invited to add responses/comments on padlet to address the following four questions:

1. What funding opportunities are available to researchers in Africa?
2. What barriers have researchers in Africa faced in accessing the funds, and what support do they need to overcome these barriers?
3. How can funders change their approaches to make their funding more accessible to researchers in Africa?
4. What are the particular considerations for ensuring researchers in Africa access funding in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The information generated from padlet will be collated and incorporated into a short report to share with participants after the event.

Expected outcomes

The conference is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Increased awareness of available research funding for education research in Africa and the expectations of funders.
2. Identification of barriers and strategies for enabling researchers in Africa to access funding for research addressing education problems and solutions.
3. Identification of specific strategies for funders to improve education research funding accessibility to better serve the needs of researchers in Africa.
4. Increased interactions and networks among researchers based in Africa (South-South), and with those outside of Africa, as well as engagement with funders.

Programme

Time 1:00pm – 3:00pm (GMT)	Activity	Speaker/Moderator
1:00 – 1:10	<p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming participants and acknowledging partners – ESSA and the REAL Centre. • Short remarks from AERD and Conference partners 	<p>Dr Pauline Essah, Director of Research and Insight, ESSA</p> <p>Professor Pauline Rose, Director, REAL Centre, University of Cambridge</p>
1:10 – 1:15	Introduction of speakers	Dr Jennifer Udeh , Head of Programmes and Partnerships, ESSA
1:15 – 1:30	<p>Keynote</p> <p>Presentation on challenges and strategies to secure funding for research</p>	Professor Tassew Woldehanna , President, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
1:30 – 1:45	Funding for Education Research – What do we know from the African Education Research Database?	Dr Samuel Asare (ESSA) and Dr Rafael Mitchell (CIRE, University of Bristol)
1:45 – 2:00	Funding opportunities for education researchers based in Africa and expectations of funders	Ms Claudia Frittelli , Program Officer for Higher Education and Research in Africa at the Carnegie Corporation of New York, USA
2:00 – 2:15	Presentation from policymaker addressing how government funds education research in a particular African country	Professor Coumba Touré Kane , First Adviser in charge of Partnerships, Research and Innovation at the Ministry of Higher Education Research and Innovation of Senegal
2:15 – 2:55	Interactive discussion: Key concerns of African researchers and the key actions by funders	Led by Professor Pauline Rose , Director, REAL Centre, University of Cambridge
2:55 – 3:00	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation and next step(s) 	Dr Pauline Essah, Director of Research and Insight, ESSA

Main conference organisers

- Samuel Asare - Research Manager, ESSA
- Pauline Essah - Director of Research and Insight, ESSA
- Lucy Heady - CEO, ESSA
- Pauline Rose - Director, REAL Centre, University of Cambridge
- Rafael Mitchell - Lecturer, Centre for Comparative and International Research in Education, University of Bristol
- Gemma Munday - Communications Manager, ESSA
- Samuel Agyapong - Evidence, Impact and Learning Manager, ESSA
- Ms Krista Samson – Research and Communications Assistant, ESSA

For further information, please contact researchenquiries@essa-africa.org.