

# Equity in international research collaborations: evidence from the African Education Research Database

Cambridge Global Challenges Annual Conference 2018

Rafael Mitchell, Samuel Asare & Pauline Rose  
Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre,  
Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

# Abstract

This presentation introduces the African Education Research Database, developed by the Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre in partnership with the charity Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA). The database is an inventory of education research from sub-Saharan Africa, which aims to raise the visibility of research from the region and strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice.

This presentation focuses on equity in relation to *what* and *how* research is conducted. Bibliometric analysis of ~3000 education research outputs from 49 countries in SSA reveals patterns in the thematic foci of research, which are considered in relation to the Sustainable Development Goal for Education. Overall we find that greatest attention is paid to tertiary and secondary levels of education which are largely beyond the reach of the most disadvantaged groups in society. However, collaborative research conducted through international partnerships (such as Global Challenges Research Fund) is significantly more likely to focus on the earlier phases of education, where improvements in access and learning have the potential of benefitting the greatest number.

Evidence from the quantitative dataset is considered alongside interviews with 26 African researchers based in the region. This presentation focuses on their experiences of donor-funded international research partnerships, and implications are considered for equity in addressing the sustainable development agenda.

# African Education Research Database

June 2017



+



- Catalogue the work of sub-Saharan African researchers
- Identify key findings & gaps
- Strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice

AFRICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH DATABASE

SEARCH DATABASE

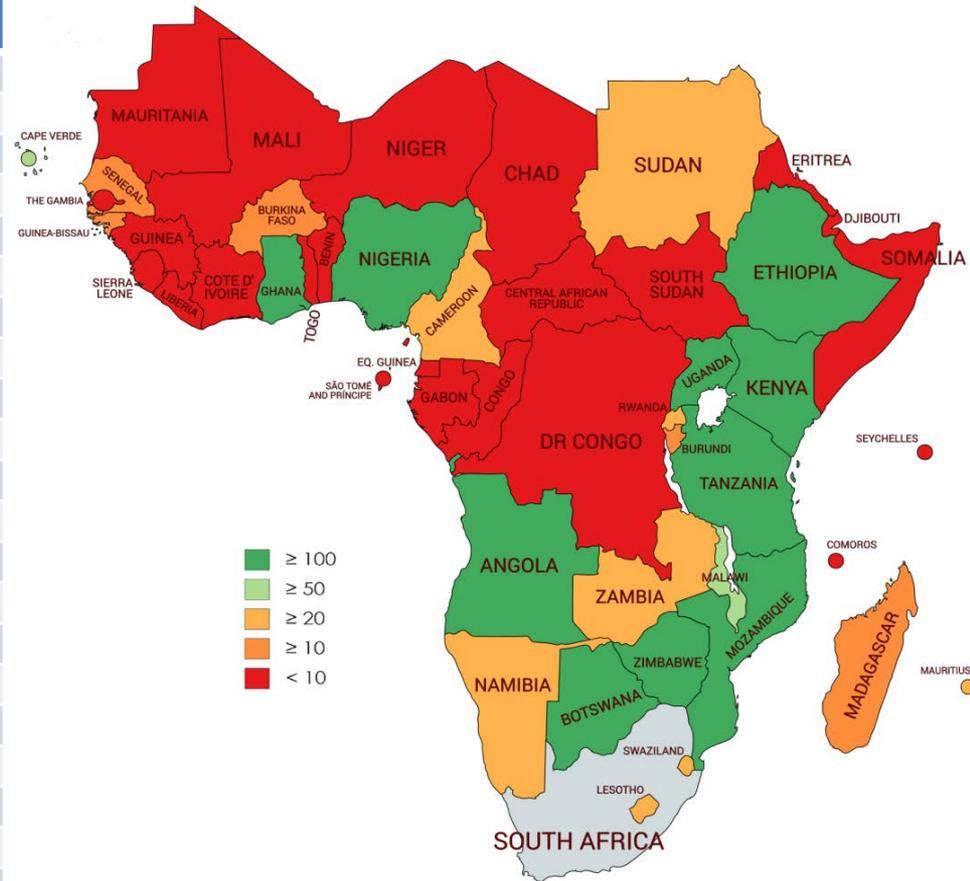
Country ▾ Keyword ▾ Method ▾

Search term (or leave blank)

Search >

<http://essa-africa.org/AERD>

	Country	# of studies	% of total studies (n = 2811)
1	Nigeria	662	23.6%
2	Ghana	260	9.2%
3	Mozambique	258	9.2%
4	Kenya	257	9.1%
5	Uganda	151	5.4%
6	Tanzania	145	5.2%
7	Ethiopia	131	4.7%
8	Botswana	124	4.4%
9	Zimbabwe	121	4.3%
10	Angola	107	3.8%
11	Cape Verde	81	2.9%
12	Malawi	59	2.1%
13	Mauritius	45	1.6%
14	Zambia	42	1.5%
15	Namibia	40	1.4%
16	Cameroon	38	1.4%
17	Rwanda	33	1.2%
18	Swaziland	23	0.8%
19	Lesotho	21	0.7%
20	Sudan	21	0.7%
21	Burkina Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Madagascar	<20	<0.7%
26	Benin, Côte D'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo	<10	≤0.3
37	Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Mauritania, Republic of the Congo, Seychelles, Somalia	<5	≤0.1%
49			



# International research collaboration

- 40% of peer-reviewed articles involve collaboration with researchers outside SSA
- Where are collaborating scholars from?
  - USA (32%), UK (29%), the Netherlands (12%), Canada & Australia (7%)
- Who are UK researchers collaborating with?
  - High: Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania
  - Medium: Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia
  - Low: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia

# What do African researchers say about equity in international research collaborations?

African-initiated	Joint-initiated	Northern-initiated
African researchers design the research & define the contributions of others	Jointly establish research agendas, designs and proposals	Mixed picture, roughly 50-50. Some projects involve genuine collaborations, where African researchers participate in designing the study, instruments, etc.
Bring in Northern researchers to <i>improve the quality of research and secure funding</i>	<i>Institutional arrangements</i> between universities rather than individual connections; <i>long-term, multi-project partnerships</i>	Others not collaborative – African researchers employed as data collectors for Northern researchers
	Positive in terms of <i>the equity of relations</i> & the scope projects give for African researchers to <i>address issues of local concern</i>	

# References

Asare, S., Mitchell, R., Rose, P. 2018. “Global policy agendas and the Education Sustainable Development Goal: Perspectives from sub-Saharan African research and researchers.” BAICE Conference, York 2018.

Mitchell, R., Rose, P., 2017a. ““Learning, if you use it, increases”: a database of African education research to inform policy and practice.” NORRAG. Available at: <http://www.norrag.org/learning-use-increases-database-african-education-research-inform-policy-practice-rafael-mitchell-pauline-rose/> (Accessed 05/03/18)

Mitchell, R., Rose, P., 2018a. “Mapping the African research evidence base for educational policy and practice.” CIES Conference, Mexico City 2018.

Mitchell, R., Rose, P., 2018b. *Literature search protocol for the African Education Research Database*. Methodological Note. REAL Centre, University of Cambridge. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1245521>

Mitchell, R., Rose, P., Asare, S. 2018a. “Research in African universities to inform the Sustainable Development Goal for Education: visibility, gaps and future priorities.” Centre for Education and International Development (CEID) Annual Conference, Institute of Education, London.

Mitchell, R., Rose, P., Asare, S. 2018b. New database puts African education research at the heart of policy and practice. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/new-database-puts-african-education-research-at-the-heart-of-policy-and-practice-101694> (Accessed 28/11/18)