

Launch of the African Education Research Database

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Aims of Mapping African Research project

1. Strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice
2. Raise the visibility of African research
3. Identify priorities and partners for future research

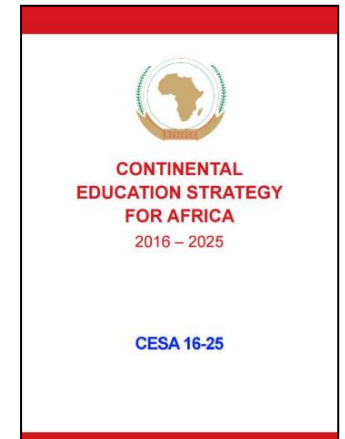
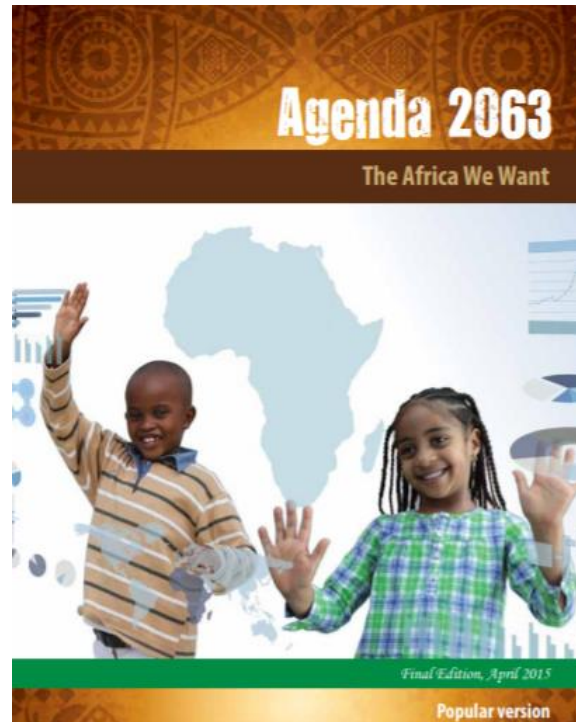


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1. Strengthen the evidence base for policy and practice

Raise access & learning in sub-Saharan Africa



Evidence and partnerships on the global agenda

UNESCO *moving forward: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2017) “Strengthen the links between research, policy and practice”

“Standardised, easy-to-manage indicators of quality [have] no contextual sensitivity. The meaning of ‘quality’ is different in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. This is why we have to invest in national research capacity – to define quality .” (*Rohen D'Aiglepierre, AFD, interview 2017*)

Diana Dalton, DFID (2018):

DFID spends £320m/year on research - “effective programming must be informed by global expertise to plug knowledge gaps...We need to strengthen research capacity in the ‘Global South’ at an individual, institutional and system level...”

Concern for equitable partnerships: shared agendas, shared funding, inclusion of a range of stakeholders (from academia, the private sector, civil society)



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2. Raise the visibility of African research

Some existing databases on specific contexts, but no central location to access the African research evidence base.

African education research is '**overlooked and undervalued**' (Maclure 2006):

- Research is dispersed across a wide range of outlets
- Many studies exist only in hard copy with limited circulation
- Barriers to publishing in international peer-reviewed journals
- Vicious circle of low readership & engagement
- Local knowledge and expertise is neglected in favour of research & researchers from elsewhere: 'epistemic injustice'.

Sources: Bonini et al. 2015, Thomas 2017, Fricker 2007

Whose agenda? A common view

“the parameters of inquiry are defined by the contracting organizations, most of which are foreign to Africa. It is thus difficult for many otherwise well-trained researchers to establish their own independent research programs when they are understandably drawn to opportunity structures that offer attractive facilities and salaries...

[As a result,] African educational research has been dislocated from national contexts and has become largely the prerogative of researchers and institutions situated in North America and Europe.”



Views of African researchers

“We have in most cases...disappointed individuals that have come here and said “Look here, we have this money. We want to do A B C D” and we have said ...“No, it’s not in our interest. **If you want to work with us, here are the areas that are of interest to us.**” (*Male researcher, Malawi*)

“We adopt a pragmatic approach to addressing some of the areas that we have identified [as local priorities]. Within our consultancy practice we very often get approached by different types of organisations around the world to support them in their work using research. **We accept these briefs if they align with our own interests**, and we take an approach which says that we’re not only going to address this particular brief: we’re going to sit down with the client, or with the partner, and find out if there’s a little bit *more* that we can do as well. And this has led to [addressing topics]...which were not originally part of the discourse with these clients or partners...We believe that these are opportunities for us...to leverage resources...and to multiply the impact...We’re always looking for funding opportunities that are aligned with our own research interests.” (*Female researcher, Nigeria*)

3. Identify priorities and partners for future research

Through:

- Analysis of thematic priorities and gaps in existing research
- Views of African researchers and policy actors



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African Education Research Database

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

For low-bandwidth conditions, use:

http://essa-africa.org/AERD_LOW



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Analysis of the African Education Research Database



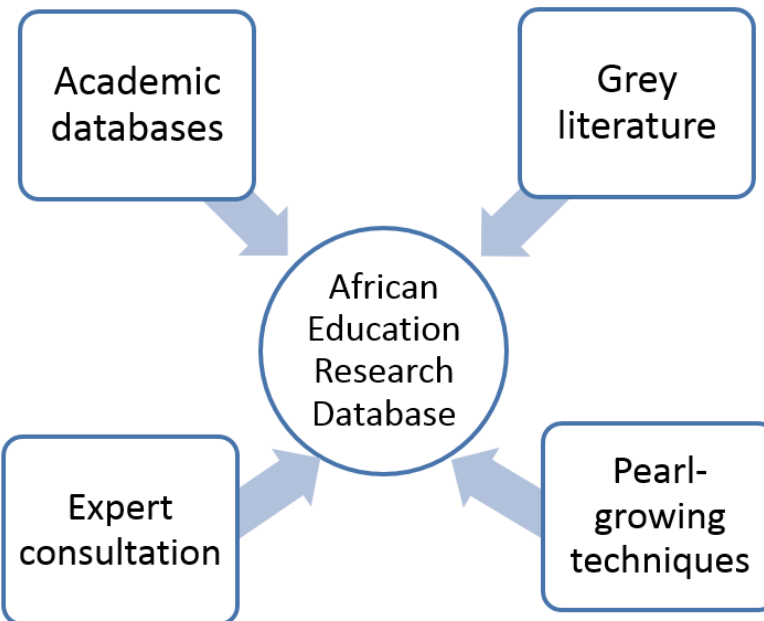
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Literature search strategy

Identify **social science research** with implications for **education policy and practice** conducted by researchers **based in sub-Saharan Africa** over the period **2007-2017**

Search: education OR school
(English, French, Portuguese)
Filter = 48 countries in SSA



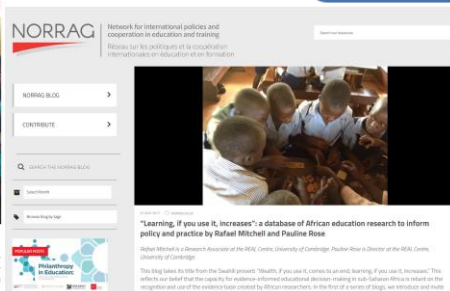
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What does the African Education Research Database tell us about research in West Africa?



The AERD Conference
As experts gather at a Conference – "Education in Burkina Faso: Progress, Current Challenges and Prospects" – hosted by the Education Research Network in Burkina Faso (center of excellence for Education in Burkina Faso – AERD) in Ouagadougou on 29th – 1st December 2017, this blog outlines what we know about research on education in the countries represented.



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Approach to cataloguing

- Titles and abstracts searched by hand
- Record title, authors, institutions, country of focus, research methods, thematic foci (up to 8 keywords), etc.
- Catalogued over 3000 studies (2011-2017)
- Search conducted in specialist Portuguese databases
- Search of French language databases is underway (Zamblé Théodore Goin Bi, François-Joseph Azoh)



Key informant interviews

Interviews conducted with SSA researchers & policy actors on:

- priorities for research
- impact of their work
- experiences of funding
- partnerships and collaboration.

14 researchers interviewed: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Senegal

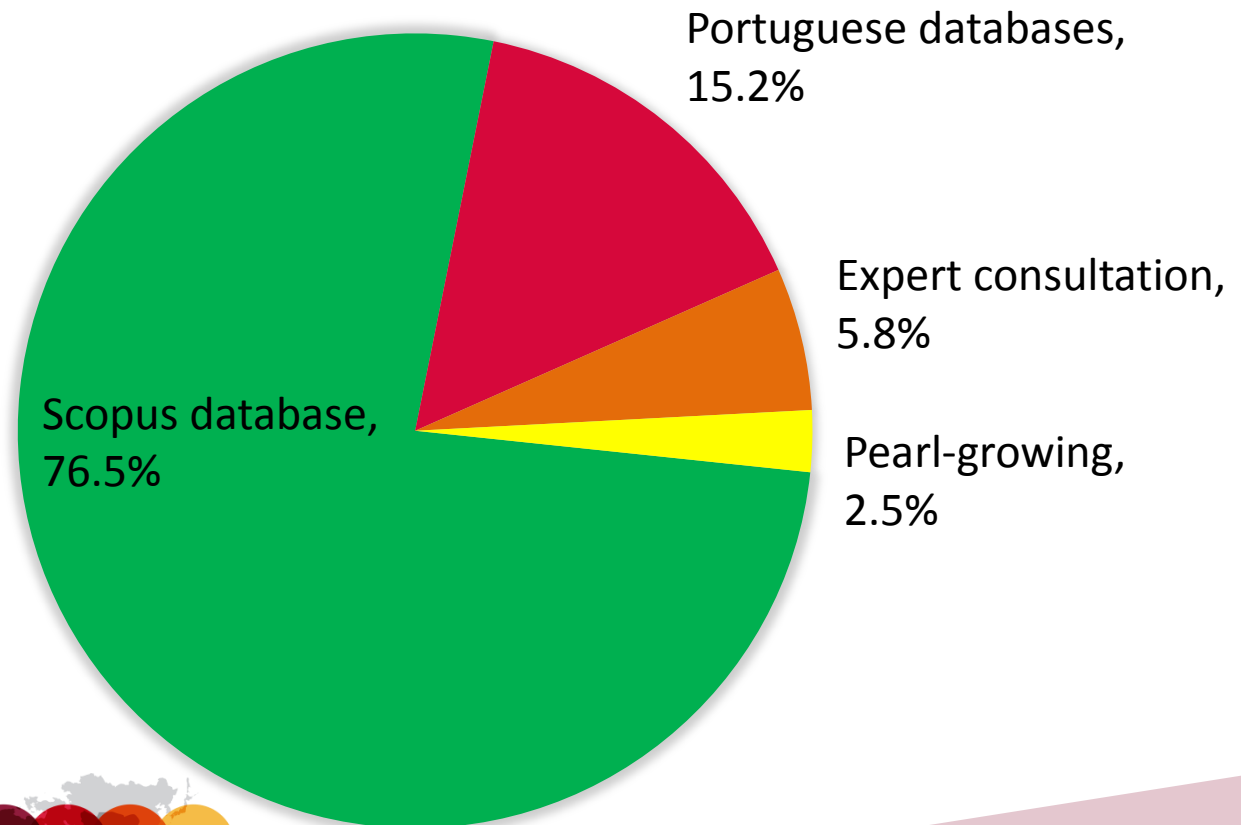


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Bibliometric analysis of the African Education Research Database

Analysis of the first 2609 studies:



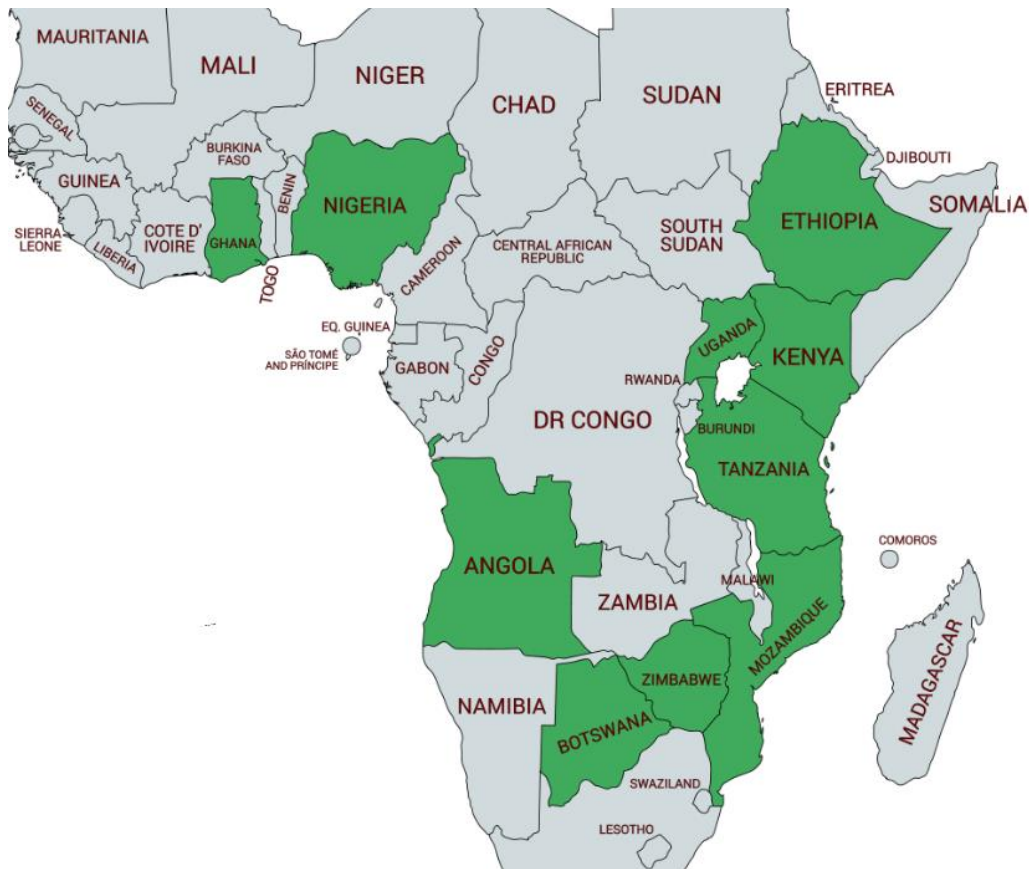
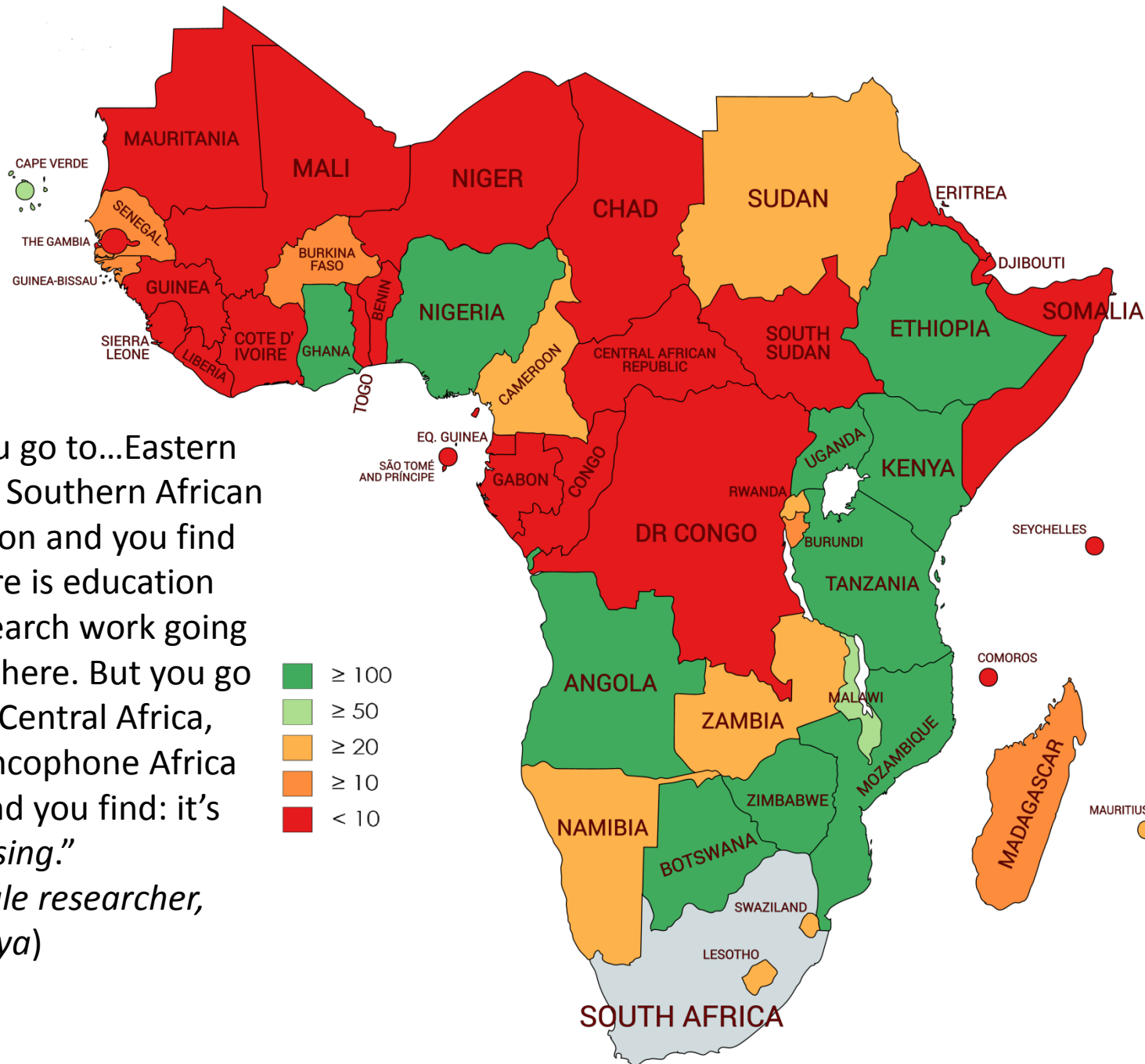


Table 1 Country of focus (Top 10 by # of outputs)

	# of studies	% of total studies (2609)
Nigeria	613	23.5%
Mozambique	263	10.1%
Kenya	236	9.0%
Ghana	225	8.6%
Uganda	140	5.4%
Tanzania	130	5.0%
Botswana	113	4.3%
Ethiopia	111	4.3%
Zimbabwe	111	4.3%
Angola	102	3.9%

“You go to...Eastern and Southern African region and you find there is education research work going on there. But you go to...Central Africa, Francophone Africa – and you find: it’s *missing*.”
(Male researcher, Kenya)



Language of publication

	# of studies	% of studies
English	2193	84.1%
Portuguese	385	14.8%
French	22	0.8%
Other	10	0.3%
Total	2609	100%

≈4% studies in AERD from Francophone countries (82% English, 18% French)

Why are researchers publishing in English?:

- Reputation, readership, international conferences, professional networks, access to foundations
- “The main motivation is to be well known in the field...you need to do your best to publish some publications in English...[At international conferences] I present in English. It has broadened my network – today, I’m well-known. I can attend a conference in English, write articles in English. Most funding is in English.” (*Male researcher, Burkina Faso*)

Top funders

269 out of 2609 (10%) of studies provided funding details, suggesting that the large majority of studies are unfunded.

Funders	# of studies
DFID	33
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	25
USAID	11
UNICEF	10

Table shows funders of ≥ 10 studies

Top funders: Francophone studies

Funding information was available for 11 out of 123 (9%) of studies from Francophone countries.

Funders	# of studies
French government institution (AFD, IRD/AIRD)	3
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	3
African Economic Research Consortium	2
UNICEF	2

Table shows funders of ≥ 2 studies

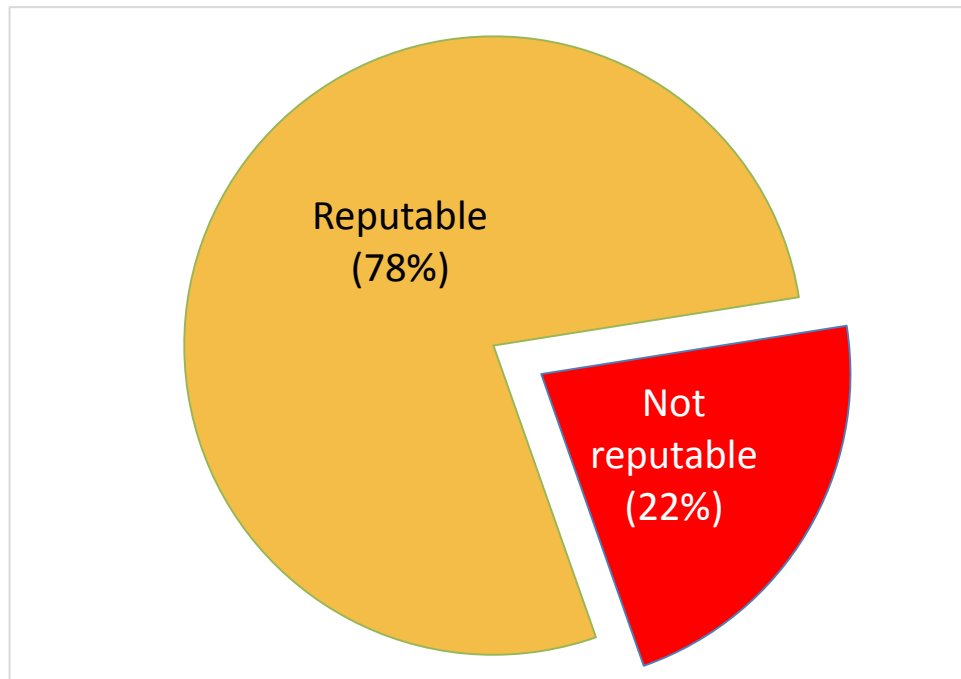


Types of research output

Largest category is **peer-reviewed articles** = 79%

Journals characterised as:

- Reputable (international, regional or national, impact factor $\gtrsim 0.2$)
- Not reputable (lower impact factor, questionable standards of review, inc. predatory journals)



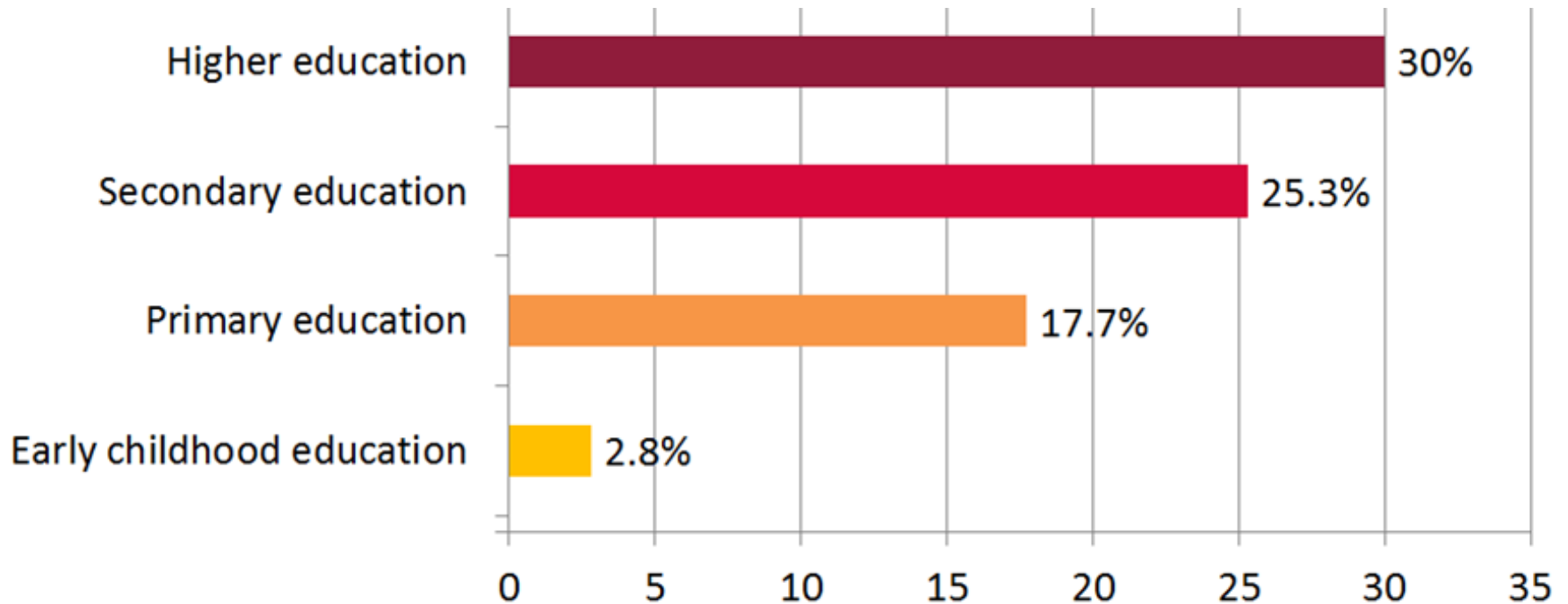
Articles in reputable journals (selected countries)

Country	# peer-reviewed articles	% articles in reputable journals
Nigeria	548	60%
Kenya	209	81%
Ghana	192	90%
Uganda	117	92%
Ethiopia	100	92%
Tanzania	110	96%
Cameroon	27	100%
Rwanda	25	100%
Burkina Faso	9	100%

Research methods by language

	Total n=2609	English n=2194	Portuguese n=385	French n=22	Franco- phone countries n=123	Studies with ≥ 10 citations n = 340
Quantitative	34%	40%	6%	23%	39%	47%
Qualitative	30%	24%	69%	36%	15%	23%
Mixed methods	12%	13%	9%	9%	11%	8%
Review	16%	17%	15%	18%	27%	19%
Unknown	7%	8%	2%	14%	7%	1%

Research by educational level



Research focuses on elite, not masses

Enrolment by level as % of total enrolment

	Primary	Secondary	Higher
Avg.	73.5%	24.7%	1.9%

Source: Ilie & Rose 2017

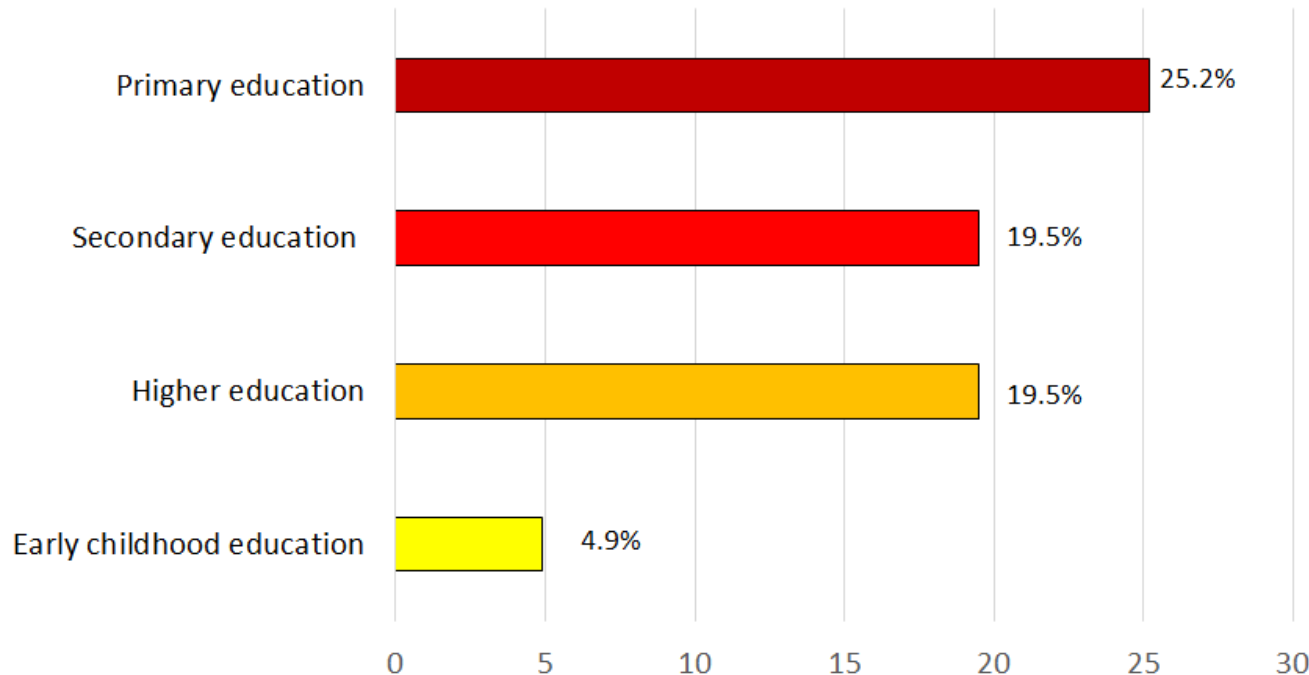
Higher
Secondary
Primary



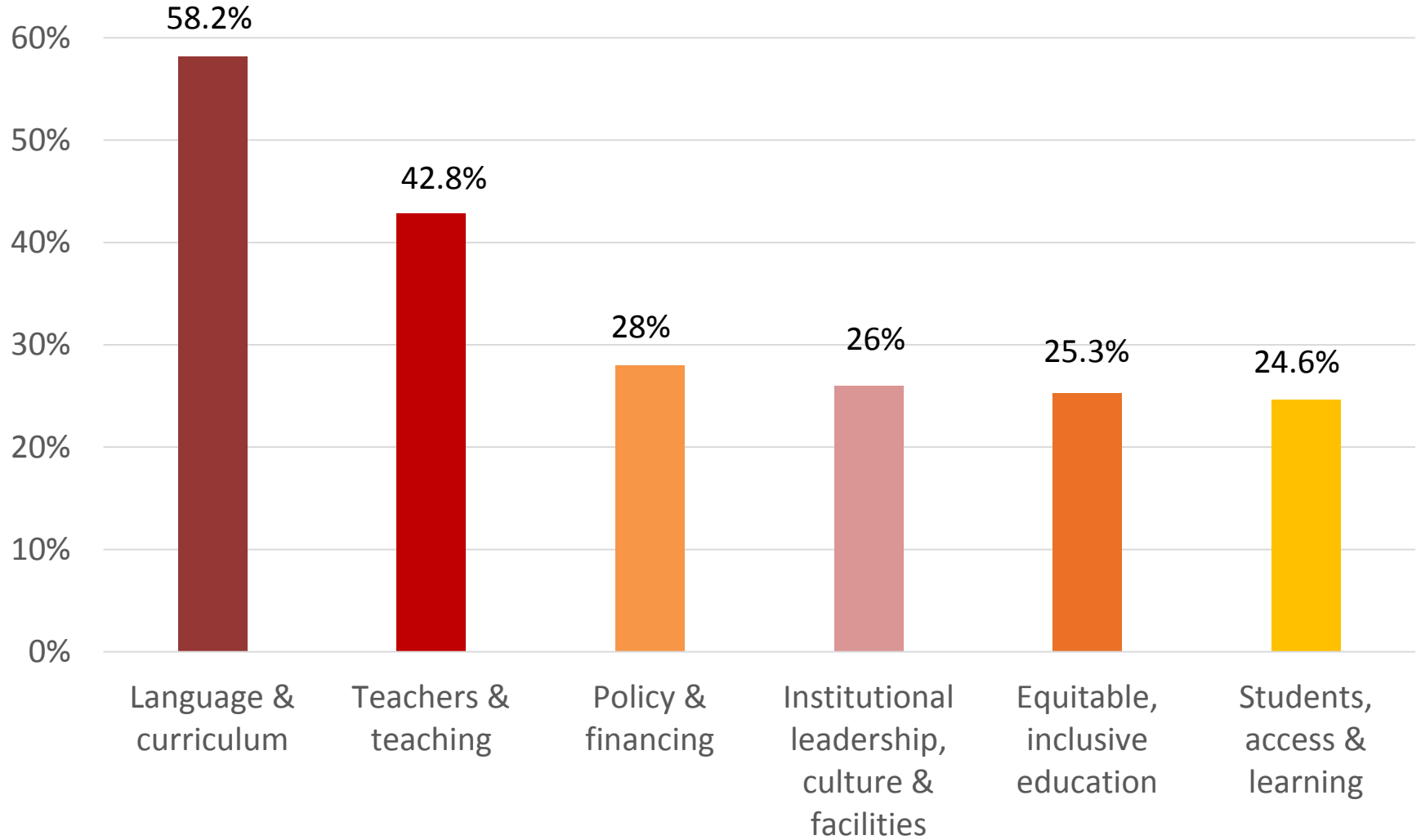
Enrolment

Research focus

Francophone research by educational level



Thematic areas

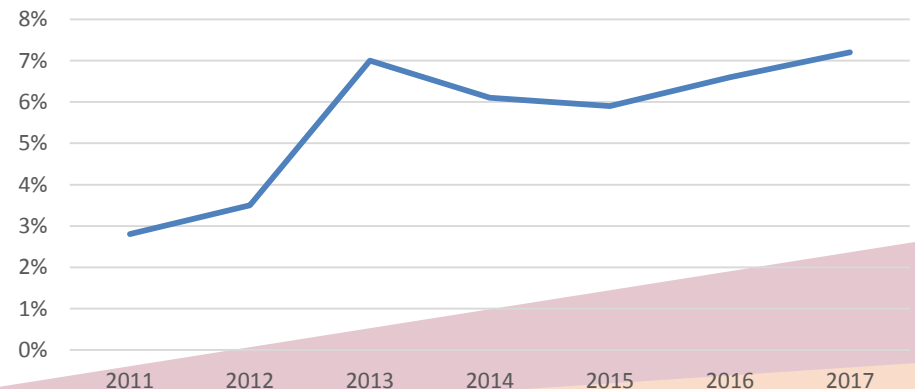


Thematic patterns and trends

Top keywords (Overall)	Top keywords (Francophone studies)
Teaching methods = 16%	Education policy = 23%
ICT in education = 15%	Access to education = 20%
Teacher education = 15%	Government spending = 15%
Education policy = 9%	African languages = 12%
Teacher capacity = 9%	Gender disparities = 12%

- Employment skills = 5%

Employment skills



‘Learning crisis’ is not a focus

Many students attending primary education in SSA (especially disadvantaged students) are not learning at an appropriate rate – evidenced in large-scale assessments of literacy & numeracy (Chimobo 2009; Mugo et al. 2015; Tassew & Aregawi 2016).

BUT

Student learning not major focus of African education research.

Student learning = 7.1%

Student motivation = 7.2%



Other applications of the AERD

Identify top research institutions & researchers

Useful for collaboration & partnerships

A report on education research and researchers in Uganda based on analysis of the African Education Research Database

Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre, University of Cambridge
May 2018

Table 4 Top research institutions by quantity of outputs

Research institution	# of studies
<u>Makerere</u> University	56
Uganda Martyrs University	11
<u>Kyambogo</u> University	10
<u>Uwezo/Twaweza</u>	8
<u>Mbarara</u> University	5
<u>Gulu</u> University	5
African Population and Health Research <u>Center</u> (APHRC)*	4
Kampala International University	4
Raising Voices, Uganda	4
Islamic University In Uganda	4

Table contains research institutions with ≥ 4 studies.

* = based outside Uganda



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Conclusion

- A lot of research out there!
- Greater recognition of African research and researchers needed for global, regional & national goals
- Greater alignment needed between African education research and global, regional & national priorities
- More work to do mapping research in SSA



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